THE

Afflicted Man's Companion:

OR, A

DIRECTORY

FOR

FAMILIES AND PERSONS

Afflicted with Sickneſs or any other Diſtreſs.

WITH

DIRECTIONS TO THE SICK,

Both under and after their Affliction.

ALSO, TO THE FRIENDS OF THE SICK, AND OTHERS WHO VISIT THEM:

AND LIKEWISE TO ALL,

How to prepare both for SICKNESS and DEATH; and how to be exerciſed at the time of Dying.

WITH

A Collection of the Dying Words of many choice and eminent Saints.

NECESSARY FOR FAMILIES.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

The DYING WORDS of the AUTHOR, written by himſelf, and found among his Papers after his death.

BY THE REV. MR. JOHN WILLISON,
Late Miniſter of the Goſpel at Dundee.

JOB xiii. 15. *Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him.*

FALKIRK:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY T. JOHNSTON.

1800.

BRITISH MUSEUM

TO THE

READER.

THE ſubject of this book, however melancholy it may appear to ſome, yet it is neceſſary unto all; ſeeing the word of God, and our own experience do aſſure us, that "Man, who is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble;" and that he "is born to trouble as the ſparks fly upward." Nay, God's deareſt children are not exempted from this common fate. We ſee what is the character God giveth his church, Iſa. liv. 11. "O thou afflicted, toſſed with tempeſt, and not comforted!"

If in this world then we muſt look for tribulation, it is highly neceſſary for every man to ſeek direction how to provide for it, and behave under it, ſo as he may glorify God, edify others, and attain to eternal happineſs at laſt. The tribulations we have to look for here are manifold; but among theſe that are outward, I know none about which men ought to be more thoughtful and concerned, than bodily ſickneſs, that uſual harbinger of death, and which uſhers the way to judgment.

This is a ſubject not much handled in public ſermons, which are delivered only to them that are in health, the ſick being incapable to attend them. Wherefore it ſeems the more neceſſary to handle it in writing, that ſo the afflicted may have a book in their houſes, and at their bed-ſides, as a monitor to preach to them in private, when they are reſtrained from hearing ſermons in public.

And though ſometimes miniſters' ſermons may be very ſuitable to the caſe of the ſick and afflicted; yet, alas! the moſt part are careleſs and forgetful hearers of theſe things while they are in health and proſperity, as reckoning the evil day at ſome diſtance from them. A book then, ſuch as the following Directory, being with them in time of ſickneſs and affliction, may, by the divine bleſſing, be uſeful to bring to their remembrance theſe counſels and admonitions which they very much neglected in the time of their health.

Again, miniſters of the goſpel, though never ſo much inclined to attend the ſick, yet by reaſon of diſability and multiplicity of other work, cannot be always with them, to direct, reſolve and comfort them. But ſuch a book as this they may have ſtill at hand to conſult with.

And in regard the afflicted, for the moſt part, are out of caſe to read for themſelves, it would be a moſt charitable work for friends or neighbours that attend them, to lay hold on proper ſeaſons for reading ſuch a book as this in their hearing, and eſpecially ſuch chapters or directions as they judge moſt ſuitable for them. Thus you might be helped in ſome meaſure to exoner your conſciences, and do your laſt offices of kindneſs to your ſick and dying friends, when you can ſerve them no longer in this world.

I might have brought in, and handled ſome controverſies (had I been fond of them) in the enſuing treatiſe, about the adminiſtration of the Lord's ſupper to the ſick, and about extreme-unction, which ſome alſo begin to plead for, and thence have taken occaſion to touch at ſome other new uſages, ſuch as the middle ſtate, prayers for the dead, and other Popiſh errors, that ſome (called Proteſtants) would have revived and introduced among us. But I have induſtriouſly ſhun-

ned what is controverſial, and kept cloſe to what is practical, and owned by all true Chriſtians.

For preventing the growth of theſe, and other errors (from which this nation hath been much longer free than others) I wiſh all ranks among us would cloſely obſerve the ſacred rule of faith, God's word, and remember the ſolemn and national engagements we of this land are under, to maintain the pure truths of God therein contained, in oppoſition to all ſorts of errors, whether Popiſh, Pelagian, Arian, Antinomian, &c. And may we ever abhor the doctrine that would teach us to break theſe bands aſunder!

Have we not ground this day to ſuſpect that Satan is carrying on a deep and ſubtle plot, for ſhaking our covenanted reformation, and weakening a Proteſtant intereſt? when, upon the one hand, ſome are beginning openly to advance and propagate the old abjured popiſh doctrines, which our reformers did throw out, and with axes and hammers would go at once to cut down all the carved work; and at the ſame time, on the other hand, ſome would be at breaking down the excellent fences of our Reformation, viz. our Covenants, Confeſſions, the Magiſtrates power, &c. For this end papers are ſpread, and poſitions advanced, impugning the warrantableneſs of our national covenants and confeſſions, and the obligation thereof; reflecting alſo upon our worthy Reformers and anceſtors, as unenlightened, who framed and took them, or died adhering thereunto; and alſo denying the magiſtrate's power, *circa ſacra* (for the ſupport of the truth, and ſuppreſſing of hereſies) acknowledged by the word of God, and our Confeſſion of Faith; and all this, forſooth, to make way for a toleration of all errors and ſects among us: though they cannot but know, that tolerating of falſe religions, is expreſsly ranked among the

ſins forbidden in the ſecond commandment, according to the expoſition of our Larger Catechiſm; and is alſo condemned by the twenty-third chapter of our Confeſſion: in both which we may ſee the clear ſcripture-texts, cited by the Aſſembly, for refuting and condemning any ſuch toleration. Ah! what joy may all this cauſe at Rome! therefore tell it not in Gath, &c.

As the Lord did ſignally countenance our Reformers' practice, in entering into ſolemn and national covenants with God, and among themſelves, for religion and reformation, by the pouring out of his Spirit from on high, for bringing in of many ſouls to himſelf, and for overturning idolatry and ſuperſtition, and advancing reformation to a great pitch, in ſpite of all the enemies and difficulties that were in the way; ſo their practice of national covenanting even under the New Teſtament diſpenſation, is ſufficiently warranted both by the light of nature, and by the word of God, and that in both Teſtaments. And this will appear, if we conſider the Scripture-precedents, together with the promiſes and prophecies of the Old Teſtament relating to goſpel-times, and compare them with the New; and eſpecially theſe which foretel the unchurching of the Jewiſh nation, and the ingrafting of the Gentile nations into their room; and that thereupon the national church ſtate and privileges of the Jews were to be transferred to Chriſtian nations, and particularly this of being nationally in covenant with God. Which prophecies are to have their ſpecial and full accompliſhments at Babylon's downfal. For illuſtrating theſe points, and applying the ſcripture-texts relative thereto, I might expatiate in ſeveral ſheets of paper, if it were proper here. I ſhall only, at this time, cite ſome of the texts that may be well improven to the foreſaid purpoſes; which

the reader may turn to, and conſider at his leaſure; ſuch as Iſa. xix. 18. 21. 23, 24, 25. Iſa. xlv. 23. Jer. l. 4, 5. the lx. lxi. and lxii. chapters of Iſaiah throughout. Iſa. lv. 3, 4, 5. Micah iv. 1, 2. Zech. viii. 21, 22, 23. Rev. ii. 15. Rom. xi. 17. 19. Rom. x. 12. 19. Matth. iii. 5, 6. Acts viii. 6. 12. 2 Cor. viii. 5. Matth. xxi. 43. Rom. ix. 24, 25, 26. compared with Hoſ. i. 9, 10, 11. Hoſ. ii. 23. Likewiſe I might cite ſeveral prophecies, with reſpect to the iſlands and utmoſt ends of the earth, which were peopled by Japhet, that have a very peculiar and favourable aſpect to this covenanted land.

Beſides all which, it is evident from the firſt and great command of the law, which is directed to Iſrael as a nation, and is obligatory under the New Teſtament as well as the Old, that it is a moral duty, univerſally and perpetually binding upon nations and ſocieties, as well as ſingle perſons, to chuſe, acknowledge, and avouch the Lord to be their God, to walk in his ways, and keep his ſtatutes. This is required in the firſt commandment, according to the expoſition of our Larger Catechiſm; and is there confirmed by theſe texts, that warrant and exemplify the practice of national covenanting, ſuch as Deut. xxvi. 16, 17. Joſh. xxiv. 22. In ſuch a national way did our fathers of old acknowledge and avouch the Lord to be their God, and devote themſelves and their poſterity to the Lord. And bleſſed be the Lord our God, who did many ways declare himſelf to be well-pleaſed with the bargain, and eſpecially by filling the temple with his glory.

As the prophets and godly Jews were at great pains to convey to poſterity hiſtorical accounts of the wonderful deliverances God wrought for Iſrael at the Red Sea, and in reſcuing them from Egypt, Babylon, and other enemies; ſo it would be uſeful to fortify our reformation, if we were careful to hand down to the riſing generation a ſenſe of God's

diſtinguiſhing mercies to this land, in delivering us from ſpiritual Babylon, and in reſcuing us, from time to time, from theſe captains that have ſought to lead us back thither. Many a time hath he delivered us, when we have been brought very low.

By many inſtances it hath appeared, that the glorious JEHOVAH hath not been aſhamed to own his covenant-relation to this ſinful and unworthy land. God forbid that we of this age ſhould be aſhamed to own our covenant-relation to him.— This hath been both our glory and our ſafety; and I hope, there will ſtill be found a remnant to own it, and plead it with God in the time of danger. Surely it is not time now to diſclaim it, when the enemies of our Zion are combining together, and ſeeking to raze her to the foundation. Let all her lovers cry mightily to her covenanted Lord in her behalf, in theſe ſhaking times: let them join to put up that prayer of the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxviii. 28. "Strengthen, O God, that which thou haſt wrought for us;" and that of Habakkuk, Hab. iii. 2. "O Lord, revive thy work in the midſt of the years."

MAY 27, 1727.

N. B. The foreſaid digreſſion in the preface to the firſt edition was occaſioned by the broaching of ſome Sectarian notions, which introduced great reelings and ſhakings in this corner, and other parts of this church; ſince which time, alas! ſhe hath enjoyed little peace within her walls, or proſperity within her palaces; but, inſtead thereof, ſhe hath been toſſed with tempeſts and troubles of various kinds, whereby the children of Zion have been brought and ſtill ly under great diſtreſs and affliction.

The firſt impreſſion of this book being diſpoſed of, and a ſecond called for, I have the more readily conſented to it, at this time of general calamity and diſtreſs, ſeeing the book is intended as a directory

to Chriſtians under affliction, whatever ſort it be. It cannot but be obvious to every ſerious obſerver, that the Lord's judgments are in the earth at this day, and that the inhabitants of this land are generally viſited with calamities of divers kinds, both ſpiritual and temporal; which makes a Directory how to manage and carry under them, the more ſeaſonable and neceſſary.

Ah! the Lord's hand is viſibly lifted up againſt us at this day, and hath been for ſome years paſt, in ſhutting up the church's womb, blaſting goſpel-ordinances, and withdrawing his Spirit from the aſſemblies of his people, and from our judicatories. The flood-gate is opened for error, infidelity, and looſeneſs to overſpread the land; ſo that the goſpel of Chriſt, the holy ſcriptures, and all revealed religion, are contemned and ridiculed by many. "The anger of the Lord hath divided us both in church and ſtate, and hath mingled a perverſe ſpirit in the midſt of us;" yea, hath made ſuch woeful breaches amongſt godly miniſters and Chriſtians, who are aiming at the ſame things, that no balm can be found for healing them. There is a way opened for a carnal, ſelf-ſeeking miniſtry to get into the vineyard, when faithful labourers are thruſt out, and godly preachers and ſtudents are diſcouraged from entering in. Not a few Chriſtian congregations, who lately were harmonious and united, in partaking of goſpel-ordinances, are now ſo miſerably rent and ſcattered, thro' mournful intruſions and dividing courſes, that they cannot worſhip God together; and many of them wandering like ſheep having no ſhepherd, expoſed to beaſts of prey, and liable to periſh in a ſtate of ignorance or negligence.

Likewiſe, the Lord's hand is remarkably lifted up againſt us, in the variety of temporal judgments and calamities brought upon us within a very ſhort time by-paſt. Sometimes the Lord ſends forth

his ſtormy winds with extraordinary violence, ſo as to carry terror and deſtruction alongſt with them both by ſea and land, and even threaten to bury us in the ruins of our houſes. Sometimes he ſends ſuch long-continued rains in time of harveſt, as threaten to deſtroy the whole crop before our eyes. Sometimes ſuch extraordinary ſtorms of froſt and ſnow, as to bind up the waters and mills, that food cannot be prepared for us, and we are ready to famiſh in the midſt of plenty. Sometimes he ſends ſuch deſtructive ſtorms of lightning and thunder from heaven, and kindles ſuch violent fires on earth, that whole cities, with their inhabitants, are like to be conſumed therewith. Upon our neighbouring countries dreadful inundations have been ſent of late, for deſtroying the inhabitants with their cattle and effects. Again, God hath viſited us with long-continued drought, cold, and unnatural ſtorms in the ſpring, and ſometimes with froſt in the midſt of ſummer, which have brought on extraordinary ſcarcity and dearth of victual; ſo that there are great diſorders committed in the land by riots and tumults for want of food, and multitudes of families are diſſolved, and forced to wander, begging their bread; and the cattle alſo are famiſhed for want of graſs and food to ſuſtain them. In the mean time we are engaged in war with cruel enemies, who ſeize our ſhips, carry our countrymen captive, throw them into dungeons and noiſome priſons, where they uſe them barbarouſly; yea, much of their blood is ſhed, and many valuable lives are loſt in our defence. And beſides our other calamities, we ſuffer greatly thro' decay of trade and merchandiſe; and penury of money: in many places merchants, tradeſmen and artificers want buſineſs; there is no work nor hire for labourers, and for thoſe who would uſe honeſt induſtry for bread, whether men or women: ſo that want is " come upon us

as one that travaileth, and poverty like an armed man;" and many are reduced to extreme miſery, and ſtarving circumſtances for lack of bread.

By all which proceedings it appears, that God hath a peculiar controverſy with Scotland, and threatens to puniſh her remarkably for her heinous ſins and provocations. The Lord's hand hath been long lifted up againſt us, and now it is higher lifted up than ever; and the higher it is lifted, the blow is like to be the ſeverer when given. He hath ſent many leſſer ſtrokes and judgments upon us, as forerunners and warnings of greater, which he hath ſtill in reſerve for us, if we repent not; for his magazine is far from being exhauſted. As there are many cauſes for theſe calamities of ours, ſo I think there is a principal one mentioned, Matth. xxiv. 12. "Iniquity doth abound, and the love of many is waxed cold." Infidelity, immorality, and contempt of the goſpel, are come to a prodigious height: our hearts are become cold and frozen to Chriſt and his intereſt, to his people, and holy laws; for which cauſe God is provoked to ſend ſuch judicial cold and froſts upon our land, and the fruits of the earth, ſo as to mar and diminiſh our crops, and reduce both men and beaſts to the greateſt ſtraits. And yet ſo great is our impenitency and perverſeneſs, that we will not ſee the Lord's hand, nor be reformed by all theſe judgments.

It might be well expected, when the Lord's judgments are ſo viſible in the earth, that not only his people by profeſſion, but even the inhabitants of the world, would learn righteouſneſs, according to Iſa. xxvi. 9. But alas! ſo perverſe are we in walking contrary to God, that neither the inhabitants of the world, nor theſe who profeſs to be ſeparated from the world will alter their courſe, nor learn righteouſneſs; nay, inſtead of that, many are learning ſtill more wickedneſs. "Shall I not viſit for theſe

things? ſaith the Lord: and ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" Alas! hath he not been provoked to ſay concerning us, as he did concerning his ancient people, Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. "If ye will not be reformed by all theſe things, but will walk contrary unto me; then will I alſo walk contrary unto you, and will bring ſeven times more plagues upon you, according to your ſins." And likewiſe to ſay unto us, as unto them, "When ye ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; and when ye faſt, and make many prayers, I will not hear; but I will conſume you with the ſword, with the famine, and with the peſtilence:" as in Iſa. i. 13. Jer. xiv. 12.

The ſword, famine and peſtilence, are God's three mortal arrows, which he commonly threatens to ſhoot againſt impenitent and incorrigible offenders. Two of theſe are already ſhot againſt us: the ſword is drawn, and much of our countrymen's blood is already ſhed; and what further ſtreams of it may flow before it be put up in its ſheath, God only knows. The evil arrow of famine (as God calls it, Ezek. v. 16.) is let fly againſt us at the ſame time; and famine is the arrow which is the ſoreſt of the three. When it was put to David's choice, which of the three he would be the butt of, he would not chuſe famine. The prophet Joel doth bewail and deprecate this judgment in the moſt pathetic manner, and calls the whole land to faſting and prayer for removing it, Joel i. 10. 14. And we ſee, when God is moſt angry, and threatens to ſend his arrows upon a guilty people, he begins with the arrow of famine, as the ſoreſt, as in Deut. xxxii. 23, 24. "I will ſpend mine arrows upon them; they ſhall be burnt with hunger." And we ſee what the Spirit of God ſaith of theſe who die by this arrow, Lam. iv. 9. "They that be ſlain with the ſword, are better than they that be ſlain with

hunger; for theſe pine away, ſtricken through for want of the fruits of the field:" and therefore their death is moſt lingering and miſerable. Likewiſe famine uſeth to bring on the moſt noiſome and mortal diſeaſes, and frequently the peſtilence doth follow upon the back of famine. Is it not high time, then, for our land to take the alarm, when God begins to ſhoot his evil arrows? When the lion roars, it becomes us to fear, yea, to humble ourſelves in the duſt, and mourn for our iniquities, which kindle the fire of his wrath.

Let us ſearch and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord, from whom we have deeply revolted: and particularly, let us mourn for and turn from theſe ſins which the word of God points out as bringing on famine; ſuch as, 1. Aſcribing our earthly comforts and bleſſings to other things than God, the true author. This ſin we find threatened with ſcarcity and famine, Jer. xliv. 17. 26, 27. Hoſ. ii. 5, 9. 2. Perverting of plenty to luxury and prodigality, ſenſuality and exceſs, revellings and dancings, balls and aſſemblies. We ſee how theſe are threatened, Iſa. v. 11, 12, 13. Amos vi. 4. 6, 7. 3. Rejecting the bread of life, and deſpiſing the food of our ſouls. God uſeth to puniſh men for this ſin, by depriving them of bread for their bodies, Jer. xi. 21, 22.— 4. Men's minding their own things more than the things of God; and neglecting to build his houſe, and put reſpect upon his ordinances. Upon ſuch accounts God brings on ſcarcity and famine, Hag. i. 9, 10, 11. 5. Covenant-breaking, and dealing cruelly with the poor, or with ſtrangers that live among us; it was for theſe ſins that God ſent a three years famine upon the land of Iſrael, 2 Sam. xxi. 1.

Moreover, let us look upon all theſe temporal ſtorms and calamities which are come, or coming upon the land, as warnings to prepare for a more awful ſtorm that we muſt all meet with, namely,

the ſtorm of death and judgment; let us ſtand habitually prepared for that ſtorm, and then other ſtorms will not ſo much affect us. If it be aſked, What we ſhall do to be ſafe in time of that trying ſtorm? The anſwer is, Let us ſee that we be among the broken in heart, or ſincere penitents, who are heartily grieved for all known ſin: that we be true believers in Chriſt, who truſt in nothing but his righteouſneſs and merits for juſtification and ſalvation: that we be born again, and made new creatures by a ſaving change both in heart and life: that it be our great buſineſs to clear up our evidences of peace with God through Chriſt, and of our title to the manſions which he hath purchaſed by his blood. O that God's judgments, when they are in the earth, were means to awaken us to flee from the wrath to come, to Chriſt our refuge! When the floods of great waters are ſwelling up to the brim, our only ſafety is to ſecure a hiding place in Chriſt's wounds.

Let us follow the example of Noah, who, when he ſaw the flood coming, took warning, and prepared an ark for ſaving himſelf, and his houſehold, Heb. xi. 7. Let us even imitate the Egyptians that feared the Lord; they, when warned of the dreadful ſtorm of hail that was coming on the land, made their ſervants and cattle to flee into the houſes, Exod. ix. 20. God hath, in mercy, provided chambers for his people, to hide themſelves in, when the ſtorms are coming, even the chambers of his attributes and promiſes, and the chambers of Chriſt's wounds and interceſſion; in theſe only we can find ſafety: let us then enter into them by faith, when he invites us, Iſa. xxvi. 20, 21.

Seeing, in theſe evil days, we have ſo many harbingers and forerunners of death before our eyes, it will be highly our wiſdom to keep ourſelves ſtill in a waiting poſture, always ready and willing to die. What is there in this weary land, to tempt

us to desire to abide in it? Is it not a land overwhelmed with sin and sorrow? O believers, are you tossed with tempests here? Seek the wings of a dove, that you may flee away, and be at rest. Be habitually desiring to depart, that you may be with Christ. Surely for you to die is gain, yea, infinite gain!—What are the imaginary pleasures of this world, to the real happiness of the next? Though the struggles of death be grievous to nature, yet the gain of dying should reconcile you to it. You do not stick at the trouble of putting off your cloaths at night, to gain a little rest to your bodies; and why should you stick at uncloathing yourselves of the garment of flesh at God's call to gain everlasting rest to your souls, and the fruition of Christ's glorious presence for ever? Let the thoughts of this gain put you upon using all means to get your hearts weaned from the love of the world, and its comforts. Keep the mantle of earthly enjoyments hanging loose about you, especially in these calamitous times, that so it may be easily dropt when death comes to carry you to the eternal world. O for more of the lively faith of that world, and of him that is the Lord and purchaser of it! But seeing this subject is more largely insisted on, in the book itself, I shall add no more here upon it. Only I shall subjoin a collection of some sweet and comfortable texts of scripture, very proper for dying believers to meditate and feed on by faith, to grip to and plead with God, and suck consolation from, when they have a near prospect of going through the dark valley, and entering into the unknown regions of eternity. God's word will then be our hope.

A

COLLECTION

OF

COMFORTABLE TEXTS

FOR

DYING BELIEVERS.

COME unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt, Matth. xi. 28. Him that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out, John vi. 37.

In my Father's houſe are many manſions; if it were not ſo, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you to myſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo, John xiv. 2, 3.

Becauſe I live, ye ſhall live alſo, John xiv. 19.

Chriſt ſaith, Surely I come quickly. *Anſ.* Amen. Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus, Rev. xxii. 20.

There remaineth a reſt to the people of God, Heb. iv. 9.

I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord, Gen. xlix. 18.

Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation, Luke ii. 29, 30.

He is the rock, and his work is perfect, Deut. xxxii. 4.

The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me, Pſal. cxxxviii. 8.

Being confident—that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt, Phil. i. 6.

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God: whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold, and not another; though my reins be conſumed within me, Job xix. 25, 26, 27.

Although my houſe be not ſo with God, yet he hath made with me an everlaſting covenant, ordered in all things and ſure: for this is all my ſalvation, and all my deſire, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, Pſal. xxiii. 4.

Into thine hand I commit my ſpirit: thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth, Pſal. xxxi. 5.

For this God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death, Pſal. xlviii. 14.

Thou ſhalt guide me with thy counſel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I deſire beſides thee. My fleſh and my heart faileth: But God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever, Pſal. lxxiii. 24, 25, 26.

The ſacrifices of God are a broken ſpirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not deſpiſe, Pſal. li. 17.

O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I flee away and be at reſt. I would haſten my eſcape from the windy ſtorm and tempeſt, Pſal. lv. 6. 8.

Though ye have lain among the pots, yet ſhall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with ſilver, and her feathers with yellow gold, Pſal. lxviii. 13.

The blood of Jeſus Chriſt, his Son, cleanſeth us from all ſin, 1 John i. 7.

Having boldneſs to enter into the holieſt, by the blood of Jeſus, Heb. x. 19.

He hath ſaid, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee. Jeſus Chriſt, the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 5, 8.

He retaineth not his anger for ever, becauſe he delighteth in mercy, Micah vii. 18.

Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him, Job xiii. 15.

In his name ſhall the Gentiles truſt, Mat. xii. 23.

Bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him, Pſal. ii. 12.

He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are duſt, Pſal. ciii. 14.

I lothe it, I would not live alway, Job vii. 16.

We know that if our earthly houſe of this tabernacle were diſſolved, we have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord, 2 Cor. v. 1. 8.

For me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain.—Having a deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better, Phil. i. 21. 23.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee, Pſal. xxxix. 7.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. His left hand is under my head, and his right hand doth embrace me. Awake, O north wind, and come, thou ſouth, blow upon my garden, that the ſpices thereof may flow out: let my Beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleaſant fruits. Until the day break, and ſhadows flee away. Make haſte, my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart on the mountains of ſpices, Cant. ii. 6. 16, 17. and iv. 16. and viii. 14.

O death, where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God, which giveth us

the victory, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Cor. xv. 55. 57.

The time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them alſo that love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8.

The day of death is better than the day of one's birth, Eccl. vii. 1.

And God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away, Rev. xxi. 4.

This is a faithful ſaying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Chriſt Jeſus came into the world, to ſave ſinners, of whom I am chief, 1 Tim. i. 15.

God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life, John iii. 16.

For he hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin; that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Thanks be unto God, for his unſpeakable gift, 2 Cor. ix. 15.

Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael, for he hath viſited and redeemed his people, and hath raiſed up an horn of ſalvation for us, in the houſe of his ſervant David, Luke i. 68, 69.

Them which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him. Then ſhall we be caught up together with them, in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord, 1 Theſ. iv. 14. 17.

Unto him that loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, &c. Worthy is the Lamb

that was ſlain, to receive power, and glory, Rev. i. 5. and v. 11.

We know that we have paſſed from death unto life, becauſe we love the brethren, 1 John iii. 14.

I am perſuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, ſhall be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

I know whom I have believed, and I am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him againſt that day, 2 Tim. i. 12.

I count all things but loſs and dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, not having mine own righteouſneſs, &c. Phil. iii. 8, 9.

Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30.

We rejoice in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh, Phil. iii. 3.

Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light, Col. i. 12.

Behold he cometh with clouds, and every eye ſhall ſee him. Amen. Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus, Rev. i. 7. and xxii. 20.

DUNDEE, 5th June, 1741.

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THE

AFFLICTED MAN's COMPANION:

OR, A

DIRECTORY

FOR A FAMILY OR PERSON UNDER AFFLICTION, BY SICKNESS OR OTHERWISE.

THE INTRODUCTION.

MAN, when he firſt dropped from his Maker's hands, was a holy and innocent creature, pure from ſin, and conſequently free from ſickneſs and trouble, enjoying uninterrupted health and proſperity both in body and ſoul. But no ſooner was he tainted with ſin, but he became liable to all ſorts of miſeries, temporal, ſpiritual and eternal: His ſoul being the reſidence of ſins and luſts, his body turned the receptacle of ſickneſs and diſeaſes. And, ſeeing God's own children have the relics of ſin and corruption in them while in this world, they are not to expect exemption from ſuch afflictions; and the infinitely wiſe God ſees meet to make uſe of bodily diſtempers, to correct the corruptions, and try the graces of his people, and to promote both their ſpiritual and eternal advantage. Hence it is ſaid of Lazarus, John xi. 3. "Behold, he whom thou loveſt is ſick." He was beloved, and yet ſick. It is no rare thing for the deareſt of God's ſaints to be put to chatter like cranes, and mourn like doves, by reaſon of ſore ſickneſs; as Hezekiah did, Iſa. xxxviii. 14. Sanctified and healthy ſouls may

be matched with weak and ſickly bodies, as was Gaius, 3 John 2. Notwithſtanding the caſe is ſometimes moſt trying and exerciſing to the beſt of God's people; and they are never more ready to queſtion God's love, or quarrel with his providence, than under heavy ſickneſs, and bodily diſtreſs. It is therefore highly the concernment of all, whether families or private perſons, to inquire how they ought to behave under or after afflicting ſickneſs; and how they ſhall provide for ſuch an evil time before it come. And for the help of all that deſire inſtruction in this matter, I have written the following directory, which, for method's ſake, I ſhall divide into ſeveral chapters.

I. I ſhall give ſome general directions to all families and perſons viſited with ſickneſs and affliction.

II. Some particular directions to theſe who are ſharply afflicted with ſore ſickneſs and long trouble.

III. Directions to the children of God under ſickneſs.

IV. Directions to unregenerate perſons under ſickneſs.

V. Directions to the people of God recovered from ſickneſs.

VI. Directions to unrenewed perſons recovered from ſickneſs.

VII. Directions to thoſe ſick perſons who are apparently in a dying condition.

VIII. Directions to the relations, acquaintances and neighbours of the ſick, who are themſelves in health for the time.

N. B. Let it be remembred, that what I ſay to thoſe viſited with ſickneſs, is likewiſe applicable to all other afflicted perſons, whatever their diſtreſs be.

CHAP. I.

Containing general Directions to all Families and Perſons viſited with Sickneſs

DIRECT. I. *Diligently enquire into the ends and deſigns for which uſually God ſends ſickneſs and affliction upon perſons.*

AN infinitely holy and gracious God hath various and wiſe ends in afflicting the children of men, whether they be converted or unconverted; which ought to be duly conſidered by all, and eſpecially by thoſe who are viſited with ſickneſs; ſome whereof I ſhall inſtance.

I. God viſits with ſickneſs, to cauſe careleſs ſinners bethink themſelves concerning their ſoul's ſtate and condition, who perhaps had never a ſerious thought about it before. There are many who, when in health and ſtrength, are ſo intent upon the pleaſures and profits of the world, that they mind nothing elſe: all the warnings, exhortations and counſels of miniſters, teachers and friends, are loſt upon them: they cannot endure to entertain a thought of God, of the ſoul, of death, of heaven, of hell, or of judgment to come; till God doth caſt them into ſome ſickneſs or bodily diſtreſs, and then ſometimes they begin with the prodigal to come to themſelves, and bethink themſelves concerning their ſouls and a future life. Now, this is God's deſign, 1 Kings viii. 47. "If they bethink themſelves in the land whether they are carried captives, and repent," &c. By ſickneſs God gives a man, that before was wholly diverted from ſoul-matters by buſineſs, company and pleaſures, occaſion to bethink himſelf. The man is now confined to his chamber, is deprived of his former company and diverſions, and ſo gets time and leiſure to

commune with his own heart, and reflect on his former ways, and to hear what conſcience ſpeaks concerning a judgment day, and a world to come, and the need of a Saviour. And ſo, by the bleſſing of God upon ſuch afflictions, not a few have begun their firſt acquaintance with God and Chriſt, and ſerious religion. Nay, the furnace is Chriſt's uſual work-houſe, where he has formed the moſt excellent veſſels of honour and praiſe, Iſa. xlviii. 10. "I have choſen thee in the furnace of affliction." Manaſſeh, the Prodigal, Paul and the Jailor were all choſen there.

II. God viſits us with ſickneſs, in order to inſtruct and teach us theſe things we know not, Pſ. xcvi. 12. It was a ſaying of Luther, *Schola crucis eſt ſchola lucis.* And indeed the ſchool of affliction is the place where many of Zion's ſcholars have made good proficiency in ſpiritual and experimental knowledge. Now there are ſeveral remarkable leſſons which God would teach us by the rod.

1ſt, The knowledge of God. It is ſaid of Manaſſeh, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 12, 13. "When he was brought to affliction," &c. then Manaſſeh knew that the Lord he was God. Though Manaſſeh was well educated, and early taught the knowledge of God, yet till now he knew not the Lord: but now he knew him in his power and greatneſs, his holineſs and hatred of ſin; now he knew God in his goodneſs and mercy, and wondered that he had kept him ſo long out of hell.

2dly, Another leſſon is, the knowlege of ourſelves. In time of health and proſperity we are apt to forget ourſelves, and our mortality; but ſickneſs cauſeth us to know that we are but men, and frail men, Pſ. ix. 20. that God hath an abſolute ſovereignty over us, and can as eaſily cruſh us as we do a moth.

3dly, He teacheth us the emptineſs of the world. How vain a help is that, which fails a man in the time of his greateſt need! And oft-times we ſee

that worldly means and friends can neither give the leaſt eaſe to the bodies, nor comfort to the ſouls of perſons under ſickneſs and diſtreſs.

4*thly*, Another leſſon is, the great evil of ſin; which is the cauſe of all ſickneſs and diſeaſes whatſoever, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you." Ah! what a root of bitterneſs muſt that be, which brings forth ſuch bitter fruit!

5*thly*, He ſheweth us the precioufneſs and excellency of Chriſt and his promiſes; which only can enable a Chriſtian to rejoice in tribulation, and be eaſy under the greateſt pains and diſeaſes. There are many who are indifferent about Chriſt in time of health, that when ſickneſs comes, do change their note and cry, O for an intereſt in Chriſt above all things!

III. God ſends ſuch trials and diſtreſſes, in order to mortify and kill ſin in us, Iſa. xxvii. 9. "By this ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his ſin." And indeed ſickneſs and affliction, through the bleſſing of God, have a native tendency to weaken and ſubdue our prevailing ſins and luſts. O man, is thy heart turned hard, ſo as thou art not ſenſible of thy own ſins, or of others ſufferings? God ſees meet to try the fire of affliction, to ſee if it will melt thy frozen heart. Haſt thou undervalued health, and ſlighted thy mercies? Now God removes them from thee, that, by the want of them, thou mayeſt know the worth of them. Art thou turned proud and ſelf-conceited? God ſends thee a thorn in the fleſh, to prick the ſwollen bladder of pride, that thou mayeſt not be puffed up above meaſure; God lays thee low upon thy bed, that thou mayeſt be lowly in thy heart. Doth love to the world prevail in thee? God ſends affliction to diſcover its emptineſs, and wean thee

from it. Art thou fallen ſecure, dead and formal? God ſends affliction to awake thee, that thou mayeſt not ſleep the ſleep of death.

IV. God ſends ſickneſs, to awaken in us the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication, and make us more earneſt and importunate in our addreſſes to the throne of grace. There is a great difference betwixt our prayers in health and in ſickneſs, betwixt our humiliations in proſperity and in adverſity. In proſperity we pray heavily and drowſily, but adverſity adds wings to our deſires, Iſa. xxvi. 16. "Lord, in trouble have they viſited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chaſtening was upon them." Though they were backward enough to pray before, yet they pour it out moſt freely now. The very heathen mariners cried loud to God in a ſtorm. What a famous prayer did Manaſſeh make when he was under his iron-fetters! We find it thrice mentioned, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 13, 18, 19. And the voice of fervent prayer is what the Lord deſires to hear.

V. Another end is, to looſe our hearts from things of this world, and cauſe us to look and long for heaven. When we enjoy health and eaſe in this world, we are apt to ſay with Peter on the mount, "It is good for us to be here;" but when diſtreſs cometh, God's people will turn their tongue, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lxxiii. 28. "It is good for me to draw nigh to God." When things here go well with us, we are apt to think ourſelves at home; but, when trouble ariſeth, we begin to ſay, "Ariſe, let us depart; this is not our reſt."—Though heaven was much out of ſight, and out of mind before, yet when afflicting ſickneſs comes, the poor believer will ſigh, and ſay with David, Pſal. lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at reſt: I would haſten my eſcape from the windy tempeſt."

VI. God deſigns to make the world bitter, and Chriſt ſweet to us. By ſuch afflictions he lets men ſee that the world is nothing but vanity and vexation of ſpirit, that riches avail not in the day of wrath; then it is they may ſee the inſufficiency of the world to relieve them, that (as one ſaith) a velvet ſlipper cannot cure the gout, a golden cap cannot drive away the head-ach, nor a bed of down give eaſe in a fever. And as the world turns bitter, ſo Chriſt grows ſweet to the believer. In time of eaſe and health, Chriſt is often very much neglected and forgot. As the diſciples, while the ſea was calm, ſuffered Chriſt to ſleep with them in the ſhip, thinking they might make their voyage well enough without his help; but when they were ready to be drowned, then they ſaw their need of Chriſt, they awaked him, crying, "Maſter! ſave us, or elſe we periſh." So the beſt of ſaints, when all is eaſy about them, are prone to ſuffer Chriſt to ſleep within them, and ſo to neglect the lively actings of faith in Chriſt; but when the ſtorm of affliction begins to ariſe, and they are ready to be overwhelmed with diſtreſs, then they cry, "None but Chriſt, none but Chriſt."

VII. God tryſts with ſickneſs and diſtreſs, in order both to prove and improve his people's graces, Deut. viii. 2. Rev. ii. 10. Grace is hereby both tried and ſtrengthened. 1*ſt*, Such afflictions do prove both the truth and ſtrength of our graces, as they ſerve to try if we love God for himſelf, if we can endure and hold out in ſerving him, waiting and depending upon him, notwithſtanding of diſcouragements. That faith will ſuffice for a little affliction, that will not ſuffice for a great one. Peter had faith enough to come upon the ſea at Chriſt's call; but, as ſoon as the waves began to ſwell, his faith began to fail, and his feet to ſink, till Chriſt mercifully caught hold of him, ſaying,

'O thou of little faith, wherefore didſt thou doubt?' Matth. xiv. 31. Little did Peter think his faith was ſo weak till now.

2*dly*, They tend to improve our graces alſo, by quickening and ſtrengthening them. They ſerve as a whetſtone to ſharpen faith, ſo as the ſoul is made to renounce earthly ſhelters, and claſp about God in Chriſt, as its only refuge and portion. They excite to repentance and ſerious mourning for ſin; for, like the winter froſt and ſnows, they make the fallow-ground of our hearts more tender. They prompt us to heavenly-mindedneſs, ſelf-denial, and patient waiting on God. Yea, the experience of God's people can atteſt it, that grace is never more lively than under affliction. David never found himſelf better, as to his ſpiritual ſtate, than when he was perſecuted and hunted as a partridge on the mountains; and hence he ſays, Pſal. cxix. 71. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

VIII. God's aim is, to awaken us to redeem time, to prepare for flitting, and clear up our evidences for heaven. In time of health we are apt to trifle away time, loiter in our journey, and forget that we are pilgrims on the earth: Wherefore God ſends ſickneſs as his meſſenger to remind us.

Now, it highly concerns us, when ſickneſs attacks us, to conſider and meditate upon theſe ends for which God brings on diſtreſs, and pray earneſtly that they may be accompliſhed in us: And ſo our ſickneſs ſhall not be unto death, (ſpiritual or eternal) but to the glory of God and the good of our ſouls.

DIRECT. II. *Let all who are viſited with ſickneſs and diſtreſs ſearch for the Achan in the camp, and enquire diligently what is the ground and cauſe of God's controverſy with them.*

IT hath been the practice of God's people in ſcripture-times, to enquire into the cauſe and mean-

ing of God's rods which have been laid upon them. So David, 2 Sam. xxi. when the land of Iſrael was three years under the ſtroke of famine, he enquired into the meaning of it. So Job is exceedingly deſirous to know why God ſet him up as a mark for his arrows, Job vii. 20. and hence it is, that he makes that petition, Job x. 2. which is moſt ſuitable for every man in diſtreſs, "Shew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me."

I grant, indeed, that God ſometimes viſits his people with affliction for the trial and exerciſe of their grace, and for their ſpiritual inſtruction, more than for the correction of their ſin. But, ſin being the original and foundation of all affliction, it is ſafeſt when it is our own caſe, and moſt acceptable to God, to own ſin as the procuring cauſe. Or, if our ſins have not immediately procured the preſent affliction, yet, the beſt of God's children muſt own, that they have at leaſt deſerved it; for God never afflicted a perfectly innocent perſon: there is ſtill juſt cauſe for it. We ſee the ſin of the Corinthians is mentioned as the cauſe of their ſickneſs, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are weak and ſickly among you." The Pſalmiſt concludes the very ſame thing, Pſal. cvii. 17, 18. "Fools, becauſe of their tranſgreſſions and their iniquities, are afflicted: Their ſoul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw nigh unto the gates of death." But ordinarily by ſickneſs the Lord points at ſome one ſin in us, more than another, ſome Jonah in the ſhip that hath raiſed the ſtorm, which the Lord would have us to ſearch out, and throw overboard without delay.

Queſt. But, how ſhall we diſcover and find out the particular ſin for which God afflicts us with ſickneſs and diſtreſs?

Anſ. 1ſt. Study the Lord's word, and the chaſtiſements there recorded, which he hath inflicted upon people for their ſins; and enquire if you be guilty

of the like. Obſerve what hath been God's mind to his people, and what ſin he hath pointed out to them, when they have been brought under ſuch a rod, and ſo you may learn his mind to you, Rom. xv. 4. — "For whatſoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning."

2*dly*, Conſider what is the ſin which conſcience doth moſt of all accuſe thee for, in thy moſt ſerious and ſolitary hours. Conſcience is God's deputy, and thy boſom monitor, whoſe voice perhaps thou haſt little regarded in the day of thy health; wherefore God hath ſent a ſharper meſſenger to ſecond the voice of conſcience. Hear now the voice of the rod, for it is the ſame with the voice of conſcience. In the day of proſperity, carnal proſits and pleaſures make ſuch a noiſe, that the voice of conſcience could not be heard; wherefore God hath brought on thee the ſilent night of adverſity, that his deputy may obtain audience. Well then, give ear; what ſaith conſcience now? May you not hear it ſaying, as Reuben to his brethren in diſtreſs, Spake I not to you in the day of health, Do not commit ſuch a ſin, and do not delay repenting for ſuch a ſin, but you would not hear. O man, let conſcience get a hearing at laſt, as it got with the patriarchs when they were brought to diſtreſs in Egypt, and made them confeſs their ſin in ſelling of Joſeph, Gen. xlii. 21. "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we ſaw the anguiſh of his ſoul, when he beſought us, & we would not hear: Therefore is this diſtreſs come upon us."

3*dly*, Conſider what are theſe evils that others have obſerved in you, whether they be friends or foes. Hearken to what a Chriſtian friend noticeth in you, either when ſpeaking to you, or to others about you: 'Let the righteous ſmite me (ſaith David) and it ſhall be a kindneſs.' Yea, do not diſregard what even enemies ſay of you. As David got good by the malicious reproaches of Shimei, in the day

of his affliction, ſo may you in the time of diſtreſs; for ſometimes malice itſelf will ſpeak truth. Enemies are ſharp-ſighted to ſpy out our faults, and ſo may, through the divine bleſſing, prove monitors to us, both with reſpect to ſin and duty.

4*thly*, Conſider the nature and circumſtances of thy diſtreſs. Oftimes the affliction is ſo ſuitable to the tranſgreſſion, that we may clearly read our ſin written on the forehead of our puniſhment, as in the caſe of Adonibezek, and many others. And alſo you may be helped to find it out by the Lord's timing of the rod to you: Was it ſent when you was under much formality in duty? or when you was eagerly purſuing the things of the world? or when you was under the power of ſome prevailing luſt or other? Then the rod comes to prove you, and awake you to ſee the evil thereof.

5*thly*, Conſider what is the ſin that hath been formerly moſt affrighting to thy thoughts, and perplexing to thy conſcience, when thou haſt been in the immediate view of death and a tribunal. It is very likely (if thou haſt not truly repented of it) that is the ſin which God now intends to awake thee to ſee the evil of, that thou mayeſt ſincerely mourn for and turn from it, looking to God in Chriſt for pardon and mercy.

Object. Ah (ſaith one) it is my lot to ly under a dumb and ſilent rod, I do not underſtand its language, I cannot hear its voice, I cannot find out the ſin that is pointed at by it: what courſe ſhall I take?

Anſ. 1. Be deeply humbled under this trial, and bewail thy caſe before the Lord; for it very much aggravates the affliction of God's people, when they know not the language of it: Hence was it that Job lamented ſo heavily, that his way was hid, and he knew not the reaſon of God's contending with him, Job iii. 23.

2. A believer's caſe may be ſometimes ſo dark,

that it requires a great deal of ſpiritual art and wiſdom to enable him to hear the voice of the rod, and underſtand its language. Hence it is ſaid, "He is a man of wiſdom that ſeeth God's name upon it," Micah vi. 9. Now this wiſdom muſt only come from above; Therefore,

3. Go to God, and earneſtly beg for this wiſdom, that you may know his mind, and the meaning of the rod. Do as Rebekah, when the children ſtruggled in her womb, ſhe went and enquired of the Lord, ſaying, "Why am I thus?" Gen. xxv. 22. Cry to God to give you his Spirit, to teach and enlighten you to ſee ſin in its evil, and the particular evils you are guilty of. This was Job's courſe in his affliction; "Shew me (ſays he) wherefore thou contendeſt with me. That which I ſee not teach thou me. Make me to know my tranſgreſſion and my ſin." There is no better way for a priſoner to know the reaſon of his confinement, than to aſk the magiſtrate that committed him. God is a wiſe agent, and can give the beſt account of his actions.

4. If thou canſt not find out the particular ſin for which God afflicts thee, then labour to repent of every known ſin, and cry for pardon of every unknown and forgotten ſin alſo. Do that out of wiſdom, which Herod did out of malice, who, becauſe he could not find out the babe Jeſus, killed all the children of Bethlehem, that he might be ſure to kill Jeſus among them. Let us ſeek the utter ruin and death of all our ſins, that we may be ſure to deſtroy that ſin for which God afflicts us.

5. Study to exerciſe a ſtrong faith, and a humble ſubmiſſion, while God keeps you under the ſilent rod. Believe firmly, that God is moſt juſt, though you know not for what he contends. And, however long he thinks fit to make you walk in the dark, reſolve humbly to wait on him, and commit yourſelf to him, who has many times guided the blind in the way they knew not.

DIRECT. III. *When any fit of ſickneſs attacks you, think ſeriouſly upon death, and make diligent preparations for it.*

I Do not mean that any man may delay the work of preparation for death, till ſickneſs cometh: No, no; this ſhould be the great and uptaking buſineſs of every man in the time of his health and ſtrength. But ſickneſs and diſeaſes being the harbingers of death, and meſſengers ſent from God to warn us of its coming; every man is thereby called to renew the work of preparing for death with all earneſtneſs and application. God's voice, by every fit of ſickneſs, is that in Deut. xxxii. 29. "O that they were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!" God knows our folly, and readineſs to forget this great work in the day of health; and therefore in his mercy he ſends ſickneſs and affliction, to teach us ſo to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to this piece of heavenly wiſdom, of making preparation for death.

And here I ſhall drop, *1ſt*, Some motives to preſs it. *2dly*, Advices for the doing it right.

I. For motives, conſider theſe things:

1ſt, Conſider God's mercy and patience towards you, in giving you ſo many warnings, and ſo many years, to prepare for death: and in ſending his meſſengers and warnings ſo gently and gradually to excite you to this work; when many younger and ſtronger than you are hurried into eternity, and little or no time given them to think where they are going. Have you not been ſpared many years in the midſt of dangers, when you have ſeen that bold archer death, ſhooting his arrows, and killing thouſands of your neighbours and friends round about you? Sometimes the arrow hath glanced over your head, and ſlain ſome great man, your

ſuperior: Sometimes it hath lighted at your feet, and cut off a child or ſervant, your inferior. Sometimes it hath gone by on your left hand, and killed your enemy; at other times it hath paſſed on your right hand, and killed your near relations. So that you have ſeen your friends and foes, ſuperiors and inferiors, relations and ſtrangers, dropping down dead round about you; and all this for a long tract of time, to give you warning to prepare for death. O let the goodneſs and forbearance of God towards you, lead you to repentance, and perſuade you to flee ſpeedily to Chriſt for refuge and protection from wrath.

2*dly*, Conſider how terrible death will be, if it meets you in an unprepared ſtate, in a Chriſtleſs and impenitent condition. What a fearful change will it bring upon you? A change from earth to hell, from hope to deſpair, from pleaſure to pain, from comforts to terrors; a change from the offers of grace to the revelation of wrath; a change from probabilities to utter impoſſibilities of ſalvation. Death will cut off all your hopes and expectations of mercy for ever, Job xxvii. 3. There is no coming back to amend what hath been done amiſs here; and there is no work nor device in the grave, whither you go. As the tree falls, ſo will it lie through all eternity.

II. I come to give ſome advices, in order to the right preparation for death. 1*ſt*, Set about ſelf-examination work. Enquire if you be in Chriſt or not; if you be yet far off from God, or if you be brought near by the blood of Chriſt. And ſee that you be impartial in this ſearch, and willing to find out the truth in this important queſtion. Be not fooliſhly tender of yourſelf, and apt to believe that you are ſafe, when it is not ſo; for this way thouſands do ruin themſelves. But be content to know the worſt of your caſe, and thoroughly to underſtand

your ſoul's danger, that you may be moved to take the right way to eſcape it. Wherefore take a view of the mark of Chriſtleſs and unconverted perſons: ſet down in God's word, and judge yourſelf by them, and conſider alſo the ſigns of true grace there recorded, and ſee if they be applicable to you or not.

2*dly*, If after enquiry, you find your ſtate is bad, that you have been a lover of the world more than of God, you have minded your body more than your ſoul, you have lived in the neglect of precious Chriſt, allowed yourſelf in known ſin; O then be convinced of your inability to help yourſelf, and your need of Chriſt to help you. And labour to be deeply humbled before God under a ſenſe of your ſin and folly. "Ah, how fooliſhly, how rebelliouſly, how unthankfully have I carried! I have abuſed God's mercies, and left undone the work for which I was made, preſerved and enjoyed the goſpel. O! I had all my by-paſt time given me to make preparation for endleſs eternity, and I have never minded it, till now that ſickneſs, the harbinger of death, is come upon me: and now what ſhall I do to be ſaved? Well then, in order to convince and humble you the more, caſt back your eyes upon the ſins of your nature, and of your by-paſt life; view them in their nature, number, aggravations and deſerts. O, do not ſo many years ſins need a very deep humiliation? O, do you not ſtand greatly in need of ſuch a perſon as Chriſt, to be your Saviour and ranſomer from ſuch a vaſt number of ſins? O but their weight will preſs you eternally down to the loweſt hell, if left to yourſelf, and laid upon your back.

3*dly*, O ſinner, art thou deeply humbled, and deſirous of mercy upon any terms? Believe then, that thy caſe is not remedileſs, but that there is a ſacrifice provided for your ſins, and an able and all-ſufficient Saviour in your offer. Believe that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, and become fleſh, to

be a ſurety for you; that he is both able and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come unto God by him. Though your ſins, your dangers, and your fears were never ſo great, yet he is able and willing to ſave. O flee preſently to this refuge city, whoſe gates are open to receive you. Truſt your ſouls upon Chriſt's ſacrifice and meritorious blood, for mercy and ſalvation. Apply humbly to him, that he may teach you the will of God, reconcile you to his Father, pardon your ſins, renew you by his Spirit, and ſave you from eternal wrath.

4*thly*, Give up yourſelf to God in Chriſt, by way of covenant and ſolemn reſignation. Every man doth this ſacramentally in baptiſm; but you muſt alſo renew it perſonally and explicitly; and thereby give a cordial and voluntary conſent to the covenant of grace. Acquieſce chearfully in the goſpel way of ſalvation through Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; and accept of God in Chriſt, as thy portion. Make choice of God the Father as thy reconciled Father in Chriſt; and God the Son as thy Redeemer and Saviour; and God the Holy Ghoſt for thy ſanctifier, guide and comforter. A likewiſe give up thyſelf, ſoul and body, and all thou haſt, to be the Lord's; engaging in Chriſt's ſtrength to live for God, and walk with him in newneſs of life. And ſtudy to do all this deliberately, unfeignedly and cheerfully. Tho' perhaps you have done this hypocritically at former times, you have profaned God's covenant, and behaved unſtedfaſtly and perfidiouſly therein; yet now endeavour to be ſincere with God for once.

5*thly*, Be living daily in the exerciſe of faith and repentance; renew the acts thereof frequently, in proportion to your renewed ſins and guiltineſs, cleave cloſe to glorious Chriſt, your high prieſt and ſurety, and be ever waſhing in his blood. As long as you are in the world, you will need to waſh your feet, John xiii. 10. Come death when it will, let it

find you at the fountain, always looking to and making uſe of Jeſus Chriſt. You have great need of Chriſt every day of your life, more eſpecially in ſickneſs; but moſt of all at a dying hour. O what need will you have of Chriſt then as an advocate with God, when the queſtion is to be determined, where your manſion is to be aſſigned through all eternity, whether in heaven or hell? O then be looking always to Chriſt with the eye of faith. Live in the conſtant thoughts of this bleſſed Mediator. Let him be firſt in your thoughts in the morning, and laſt in your thoughts at night.

6thly, Be ſtriving to mortify every ſin and luſt, both outward and inward. By dying to ſin daily, that ſo you may not die for ſin eternally. O that ſin may be daily loſing its ſtrength, and dying in you! ſo that it may be certainly dead before you! Pray earneſtly, that all your ſins may die before you die: for if they die not before you, but outlive the dying body, they will live eternally to ſting and torment the never-dying ſoul.

DIRECT. IV. *Be not anxious for recovery to health; but leave the iſſue of the preſent ſickneſs to the will and pleaſure of the infinitely wiſe God.*

REMEMBER O man, thou art the clay, and God is the potter; he is abſolute Lord of thy life and times, therefore learn to adore his ſovereignty over thee and all thy enjoyments. David doth ſo, when he ſays, "Lord my times are in thy hand," Pſ. xxxi. 15. And indeed they are only beſt in his hand, for he beſt knows how to diſpoſe of them. The prophet ſaith, Iſa xxx. 18. "The Lord is a God of judgment, bleſſed are all they that wait for him." Judgment there ſignifies wiſdom: the Lord is a God of wiſdom, and will order and time all things well; and therefore it becomes us

quietly to wait for his pleaſure, ſaying, "The will of the Lord be done." It is taken notice of, as great ſin in the Iſraelites, that they waited not for his counſel, but limited the holy One of Iſrael, Pſal. lxxviii. 41. What unaccountable folly and preſumption is it, for worms of the earth to ſeek to ſtint and limit the Sovereign of heaven to their meaſures! It becomes us at all times, and eſpecially in ſickneſs and afflictions, to have low ſubmiſſive thoughts of ourſelves, and high exalted thoughts of God's ſovereignty, ſuch as Nebuchadnezzar had, Dan. iv. 35. "And all the inhabitants of the earth, are reputed as nothing: And he doth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, what doſt thou?" We ſhould therefore refer all to his wiſe determination, and be willing to die or live, as he ſhall be pleaſed to appoint. I remember I have read of a godly woman, who, in her ſickneſs, being aſked by one, whether ſhe was moſt deſirous to die or to live? I have no choice in that matter, but refer myſelf to the will of God. But, ſaid the other, ſuppoſe God ſhould refer it to you, whether to die or to live? which of them would you chuſe? If God (replied ſhe) ſhould refer it to me, I would even refer it back again to him. It becomes thee, O man, to be entirely reſigned to the will of thy Maker, and to ſtand like a centinel in thy ſtation, ready to move as thy great general and commander ſhall give orders concerning thee. It would be pleaſant and acceptable to God, to ſee thee more deſirous to be delivered from ſin, than from ſickneſs. O but ſin is a far worſe deſeaſe than any ſickneſs in the world! Beg importunately, that the great Phyſician may cure this woful ſoul diſeaſe, and let him do with the body what he pleaſeth. This was David's practice in his affliction, Pſal.

xxv. 18. "Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my ſins." As for his pains and afflictions, he aſks no more but that God would regard them, and look upon them, and do with them as he thought fit; but, as for his ſins, no leſs will ſatisfy him than a pardon, and blotting them entirely out, ſo as they might be remembered no more.

DIRECT. V. *Bind yourſelf with holy purpoſes and reſolutions, in Chriſt's ſtrength, to be more watchful againſt ſin, more diligent in duty, and to improve the time of health better, if God ſhall be pleaſed to reſtore it again to you.*

WHEN God is viſiting your iniquities with rods and pleading a controverſy with you for your omiſſions and ſlackneſs in duty, he expects that you will return from your backſlidings, and ſet about a ſerious reformation and change of life, Hoſ. v. 15. "I will go, and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and ſeek my face; in their affliction they will ſeek me early." See then that you open your ear to diſcipline: ſtudy to anſwer God's call and expectation, and in his ſtrength reſolve to enter upon a new life. "Surely now it is meet to be ſaid unto God, I have born chaſtiſement. I will not offend any more. That which I ſee not, teach thou me: If I have done iniquity, I will do ſo no more," Job xxxiv. 31, 32. Now is the ſeaſon you ſhould ſay with Ephraim, Hoſ. xiv. 8. "What have I to do any more with idols?"

Having duly examined yourſelves, and ſearched out your ſins, you ought to put a bill of divorce into each of their hands. Deliberately reſolve againſt all your ſins, whether ſecret or open; and eſpecially reſolve againſt your darling and beloved ſins, thoſe

ſins which do moſt eaſily beſet you. Reſolve alſo againſt all temptations to ſin, and particularly againſt the ſnares of bad company, whereby you have been formerly enticed; ſay now with David, Pſ. cxix. 115. "Depart from me, ye evil doers: For I will keep the commandments of my God." You muſt not only purpoſe to forſake all ſin, but alſo to mind every known duty: That you will make religion your one thing needful; the pleaſing of God, the chief buſineſs of your life; that you will ſet the Lord always before you, give him your heart in all duties, aim at nearneſs and communion with God in every one of them; and ſtill preſs forward to the full enjoyment of God in heaven through eternity.

Reſolve alſo, through grace, that you will in a ſpecial manner, mind ſecret duties, which the eyes of men do not obſerve, and theſe duties which conſcience doth moſt challenge you for neglecting. And you that are heads of families reſolve to make more conſcience of family-religion, of worſhipping God in your families both morning and evening, inſtructing your children and ſervants in the knowledge of Chriſt, and recommending religion and godlineſs to all round about you, whether relations or ſtrangers.

And if you would have your reſolutions effectual, ſee that they be accompanied with a deep ſenſe of your inſufficiency to perform them in your own ſtrength. Bear always in mind the corruption and deceitfulneſs of your own heart, and make all your reſolutions in a humble dependance on the ſufficiency of Jeſus Chriſt your Surety. Obſerve the apoſtle Paul's advice to his ſon Timothy, 2 Tim. ii. 1. "Be ſtrong in the grace that is in Jeſus Chriſt." All your ſtock, O believer, is in his hand, ſo that without him you can do nothing; but, through Chriſt ſtrengthening you, thou art able to do all things.

DIRECT. VI. *Set your houſe in order, by making your letter wills, and ſettling your domeſtic and ſecular affairs, while you have freedom and capacity for doing it.*

AFTER the heart is ſet in order, the next work is to ſet your houſe in order, according to God's counſel to Hezekiah, Iſa. xxxviii. 1. It is recorded of the patriarch Abraham, that he was careful to ſettle the affairs of his family before his death, Gen. xxv. 5, 6. He diſpoſed of his eſtate to Iſaac, and legacies to the ſons of his concubines. It is too general a fault that men delay and put off making their wills, as they do their repentance, to the very laſt, and ſo too frequently never make them at all. Conſider the evil of deferring or neglecting this neceſſary affair: For if you, upon whom God hath beſtowed means, ſhould die inteſtate, your eſtate may deſcend otherwiſe than you intended; much of it may be ſpent in tedious and expenſive law-ſuits; ſuch differences may fall out among relations that ſhould live in friendſhip and mutual affection, as cannot be healed; ſome of them may be reduced to extreme want, when a ſmall legacy might have put them in a way of living: and many ſuch inconveniencies may follow. Well then, if your neglect ſhould bring on theſe evils, and involve poſterity into endleſs ſtrifes and contentions; may you not juſtly fear that the guilt thereof will purſue you into another world, whoſe wretched careleſſneſs was the occaſion of all that miſchief?

Pray, what is the reaſon that men put off this affair? Is it not, becauſe they do not incline to think ſo ſeriouſly on death, as this will occaſion them to do? Doth not this ſmell of abominable earthly-mindedneſs, and ſpeak as if a man deſired all his portion in this life, and cared not for a better? and that he is ſo far from preparing for death, that he

cannot endure to think of it! Alas, that this worldly diſpoſition ſhould ſo far prevail amongſt us! But ſurely there is no wiſe man will ſay, that the putting off the thoughts of death will keep death at the greater diſtance; or that preparing for death, and making our wills, will bring on death the ſooner.

It were ſurely beſt to order our affairs timeouſly; yea, do it in time of health, rather than to delay unto a ſick-bed or a death-bed; for either you may be ſnatched off ſuddenly, and have no time for it; or you may be taken with ſuch a diſtemper as ſhall ſeize your tongue, ſo as you cannot expreſs your mind; or ſeize your underſtanding, ſo as you cannot rationally diſpoſe of your effects. And though none of theſe ſhould happen, yet certainly it proves a great diſturbance to a dying man, to be caſting up, ordering and ſettling the affairs of his family, when he ſhould be ſecuring a heavenly manſion for his ſoul, and clearing up his evidences thereunto. It is great wiſdom to put this affair by-hand, that you may have as little to do with the world as may be, and all occaſions of diſtraction to your immortal ſoul may be prevented, when it is near to its flitting into an eternal and unchangeable ſtate.

Moreover, in ſettling your ſecular affairs, obſerve theſe following advices: 1. Make your wills cheerfully, and freely lay down whatever you enjoy, when God calls you to it. Praiſe God that you had theſe things while you needed them; and when you have no longer uſe for them, leave them without repining, to theſe that come after you. Look not back to Egypt, when you are upon your march to Canaan.

2*dly*, See that you deal juſtly, in providing for your family, paying all your juſt debts, and making reſtitution, if you have wronged any. Abhor all deſigns of defrauding any of your lawful creditors: For, if your laſt act ſhould be unjuſt, you leave a

blot upon your name here; and ſince you cannot repent of this wickedneſs, it being among your laſt deeds, you expoſe yourſelves to a fearful doom in the world whether you are going.

3*dly*, In ſettling your eſtates, ſee that God and good uſes be not forgot nor left out. When you are leaving the world, and can glorify God no longer here by your words or actions, ſee to honour the Lord with your ſubſtance, by leaving ſome part thereof to a pious and charitable uſe. I know, it is a work of charity to give for maintaining the bodies of the poor; and eſpecially the poor of God's people, who belong to his family. But it is much more pious and charitable, to leave ſomewhat for propagating Chriſtian knowledge in dark places for educating poor children to read the Scriptures, and inſtructing ignorant ſouls in the knowledge of Jeſus Chriſt. It is much to be lamented, that ſo many rich men among us die, and leave nothing to ſuch pious uſes. The liberality of Papiſts on their death-beds, may give a ſharp challenge to many profeſſed Proteſtants. O what a ſhame is it to the profeſſors of the doctrine of grace, that the falſe doctrines of merits and purgatory ſhould produce ſo many donations and mortifications among the Papiſts, and the faith of Chriſt's moſt glorious goſpel ſhould not do the like among true believers! Shall the proud conceit of merit, and the imaginary fear of purgatory, prompt men to do more this way than the certain perſuaſion of the love of God in Chriſt, and the well grounded hope of eternal life, through the alone merits of Jeſus Chriſt? O what a reproach is this to our holy religion?

4*thly*, It might be much to the glory of God and good of ſouls, that a great part of our teſtaments and latter-wills ſhould conſiſt of ſolemn charges, exhortations and bleſſings to our children, or thoſe to whom we bequeath any legacy; ſo as they can

never open our teſtaments, or look into them, but they might hear ſomething that may make impreſſions on their ſouls for their ſpiritual edification, and for quickening them to the diligent practice of both family and perſonal godlineſs.

CHAP. II.

Containing ſome particular Directions to theſe who are ſharply afflicted with ſickneſs and long trouble.

DIRECT. I. *Juſtify God in the greateſt afflictions which befal you.*

THOUGH God ſhould condemn you, ſee that you acquit him, and ſay, he is righteous in all his dealings. When the church was under the heavieſt diſtreſs, ſhe finds cauſe to juſtify God, Lam. i. 18. "The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled againſt his commandment." So doth godly Nehemiah, Neh. ix. 33. "Howbeit thou art juſt in all that is brought upon us; for thou haſt done right, but we have done wickedly." The ſame doth holy David acknowledge, Pſal. cxix. 75. "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that in faithfulneſs thou haſt afflicted me." Now, in order to bring you to this agreeable frame, and to convince you of the equity and juſtice of God in his diſpenſations, however heavy and long your diſtreſs be, I ſhall lay before you theſe conſiderations:

1ſt, Conſider the infinitely holy and righteous nature of that God who ſmiteth thee, Pſ. cxix. 137. "Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." We preſume it of a righteous man that he will do righteous things: and, ſhall we not much more believe ſo of a holy and righteous God? We cannot be infallibly certain that a righteous man will always do ſo; for a righteous man may leave his righteouſneſs, becauſe the creature

is mutable: but God is immutably righteous; ſo that we may be confident of it, that the Judge of all the earth will do right, for it is impoſſible he can do otherwiſe, Zech. iii. 5. "The juſt Lord is in the midſt thereof, he will not do iniquity." He will not, he cannot; for it is contrary to his nature.

2*dly*, Conſider that God never brings on any affliction without a cauſe, 1 Cor. xi. 30. "For this cauſe many are ſick." He hath ſtill juſt ground for the heavieſt affliction, from thy ſins and provocations; and may always ſay to thee, as to Iſrael, Jer. ii. 17. 18. "Haſt thou not procured this unto thyſelf, in that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Thine own wickedneſs ſhall correct thee, and thy backſlidings ſhall reprove thee: know therefore, and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord." There is ſtill ground enough for affliction to be found in the beſt of God's people; and therefore it is ſaid, Lam. iii. 33. "For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." No; it is our ſins that oblige him to it. As Chriſt whipped the ſellers of oxen and ſheep out of the temple with a whip (as is generally thought) made of their own cords; ſo God never ſcourgeth us but with a whip made of our own ſins. Prov. v. 22. "His own iniquities ſhall take the wicked himſelf, and he ſhall be holden with the cords of his ſins." If we conſider the mighty God as a Lord diſpenſing grace, then we find he acts ſovereignly, and according to his will and pleaſure, Mat. xi. 16. "Even ſo, Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight." But, if we conſider him as a judge diſpenſing judgments, he never doth it without a foregoing cauſe on the creature's part. God's treaſure of mercy is always full and ready to be let out to them that ſeek it; but his treaſure of wrath

is empty till men fill it up by their ſins, Rom. ii. 15. "Thou treaſureſt up to thyſelf wrath againſt the day of wrath." We do always provide fuel for God's wrath before it kindle and break out upon us.

3*dly*, Conſider further this inſtance of God's equity, that when their is a cauſe given, God doth not preſently take it, but continues to threaten oft, and warn long, before he executes the ſentence of his word. He ſends leſſer ſtrokes, as warnings of greater, if we repent not: and he repeats his warnings, many times, both by his word and providence, before he ſmite. Yea, even when repeated warnings are ſlighted, he delays a long time, and waits to be gracious, Iſa. xxx. 18. And when men's obſtinacy and incorrigibleneſs arrive to ſuch a height, that he can ſpare no longer; yet, how loth is he to give them up to ſevere judgment! Hoſ. xi. 8. "How ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim? How ſhall I deliver thee, Iſrael! How ſhall I make thee as Admah? How ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together." When the Lord hath ſinners in his arms, ready to give them up to ſore judgments, yet he makes a ſtand, and would fain be prevented before he proceeds to his ſtrange work: for ſo he calls his acts of judgment, Iſa. xxviii 21. Acts of mercy are co-natural, moſt agreeable and pleaſant, to God, Mic. vii. 18. 'He delighteth in mercy:' but judgment is his ſtrange act, and his ſtrange work.

4*thly*, Conſider, that when at laſt he ſends ſtrokes on us, they are always ſhort of the cauſe; he exacts not the whole debt that ſinners owe to his juſtice, as Ezra doth acknowlege, Ezra ix. 13. "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." The ſtroke he there is ſpeaking of, was a moſt heavy judgment; fearful ruin and deſolation came upon Jeruſalem, and the whole land of Judea; the

city and temple were burnt to aſhes, the people carried captive to a ſtrange land, and treated as bond ſlaves among the heathen; Yet, ſaith the holy man, "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve," *q. d.* 'It is true we have been carried to Babylon, but in juſtice we might have ſent to hell: our houſes were burnt, but our bodies might have been burnt too: We have been drinking water, but we might we might have been drinking blood: We have had grievous burdens on earth, but we might have been groaning in hell: We were baniſhed from the temple, but we might have been eternally baniſhed from God's preſence.' We think it a great favour among men, when any puniſhment is mitigated, when the ſentence of death is changed into baniſhment, or when baniſhment is turned into a fine, or a great fine is made ſmaller: And will you think that God deals ſeverely or rigorouſly with you, when he lays you on a ſick-bed, when he might juſtly be laid you in hell, and pour-ed out all his wrath upon you there! You but taſte of the brim of the cup, when God might cauſe you drink of the bottom and dregs thereof.

Have you not cauſe then to acknowledge God's juſtice, nay, even his mercy too, in his dealings with you, however rough they may ſeem to be? May you not, with good reaſon, ſay, any thing leſs than hell is a mercy to ſuch an ill-deſerving creature as I am? If even a hard hearted Pharaoh under diſtreſs, came the length to own the juſtice of God, Exod. ix. 27. "I have ſinned, the Lord is righteous;" ſhall any profeſſed Chriſtian fall ſhort of that obſtinate Egyptian?

DIRECT. II. *Labour ſtill to be ſenſible of God's hand under heavy affliction, and beware of ſtupidity and unconcernedneſs under it.*

IT is a ſin to faint under heavy affliction, but it is a duty to feel it, Heb. xii. 5. "My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." The apoſtle there doth caution againſt two extremities, which every Chriſtian under the rod ſhould be careful to avoid, 1. Deſpiſing or making light of affliction. 2. Sinking or deſponding under affliction. We are in great hazard of running into the one or the other. As to the firſt, We may be ſaid to deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord, when we do not obſerve God's hand in our affliction, ſo as to reform the things whereby he is diſpleaſed; or when we reſolve to abide the trial by the ſtrength of our own reſolutions, and ſtout-heartedneſs, without looking to God for ſupporting grace; or when we turn ſtupid and inſenſible under the heavy and long continued rod. This deſpiſing and ſlighting of the rod is not patience, but ſtupidity; it is not Chriſtian magnanimity, but a ſtoical temper of mind, moſt ſinful and provoking to God. We ſee how angry God is with ſinners when his ſtrokes are not felt, Iſa. xli. 25. "He hath poured upon him the fury of his anger; and it hath ſet him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it hath burned him, yet he laid it not to heart. Jer. v. 3. Thou haſt ſtricken them, but they have not grieved: thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refuſed to return." There is little hope of a ſcholar minding his leſſon, that is regardleſs of whipping. It is a dreadful ſign to be like Pharaoh, ſleeping in our ſins, when God is thundering in his wrath. He that

will ſleep when his houſe is on fire, or lie ſtill in bed, as if he was not concerned, may aſſuredly expect to be conſumed in its flames. As David could not bear it, when the meſſengers he ſent to the Ammorites out of good will, were affronted and deſpiſed; ſo neither will God endure it, when the meſſengers he ſends to ſinners are ſlighted; for he that ſlights a meſſenger affronts his maſter. Thoſe who make light of affliction, make light of God that ſends it, and make light of ſin that procures it.

Queſt. But, when is it that people are ſuitably concerned under a heavy rod? *Anſw.* When they ſee God's hand, hear God's voice, anſwer his intent, are curious to know his mind, deſirous to do theſe things he requires, and reform theſe things he is diſpleaſed with. Remember, every affliction is a meſſenger from God, and deſerves a hearing from you. It comes to thee with ſuch a meſſage as Ehud did to Eglon, Judges iii. 20. "I have an errand from God to thee, O king:" I have a meſſage from God to thee, O Chriſtain, O ſinner. Well, lend an ear, and hearken with reverence and attention to this errand; ſay, "Speak, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth. What wouldſt thou have me to do?" Believe it, that God ſpeaks as really to you by his rod, as by his word; therefore he ſays, Hear ye the rod. God ſpake as truly by his ten plagues to Egypt, as he did by his ten precepts to Iſrael. And if the calm voice of the word were more regarded, we ſhould hear leſs of the rough voice of the rod. As Gideon took briers, and thorns of the wilderneſs, and with them taught the men of Succoth, who would not be taught by fairer means, Judges viii. 16. ſo God takes the ſharp prickles of ſore afflictions, to teach you his ſtatutes, when you will not be taught by ſofter methods. Beware then of grieving God's Spirit, by turning

ſtupid and inſenſible under ſharp or long continued trials: But, the more pains God is at with you by his rod, hearken the more carefully to his voice; and labour to make the greater proficiency in the ſchool of affliction, where he thinks fit to continue you; that ſo you may inherit that bleſſing, Pſal. xciv. 12. "Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneth, O Lord, and teacheſt him out of thy law."

DIRECT. III. *Beware of miſconſtructing God's dealing towards you, and of charging him fooliſhly.*

WE are apt to believe Satan's ſuggeſtions under heavy trials, and to entertain wrong thoughts of God and his diſpenſations. Now, theſe you ought to guard againſt; as for inſtance, *1ſt*, Beware of harbouring atheiſtical thoughts, as if there were no providence, no wiſe governour of this lower world, no diſtinction betwixt the good and bad; and that it is to no purpoſe to be religious, like theſe mentioned in Mal. iii. 14. "Ye have ſaid, It is vain to ſerve God: and what profit is it, that we have kept his ordinances, and walked mournfully before the Lord of hoſts?" Yea, even the Pſalmiſt, when he begins to compare his own ſharp trials with the wicked's eaſe and proſperity, is tempted to think all religion is vain, and ſay, Pſal. lxxiii. 13, 14. "Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chaſtened every morning." But theſe are nothing but the helliſh ſuggeſtions of Satan, that irreconcileable enemy of God and precious ſouls, againſt which we ſhould cloſely ſtop our ears.

2dly, Beware of charging God in your hearts with rigour or injuſtice in his dealing, like theſe, Ezek. xviii. 25. "Yet, ye ſay, the way of the Lord is not equal." How highly unjuſt and in-

jurious are ſuch thoughts of him, who is the Judge of all the earth, and cannot but do right!

3dly, Beware of thinking that heavy afflictions do always ſpeak wrath in God againſt thee: No, ſometimes they ſpeak forth love, and God may be carrying on a love-deſign thereby to thy ſoul, *viz.* to ſubdue thy ſtrong luſts, and draw thee nearer to himſelf: as for theſe who think that the ſmarting rod and divine love cannot dwell together, let them read that paſſage, Heb. xii. 5, 6. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which ſpeaketh unto you as unto children, My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chaſteneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon whom he receiveth."

4thly, Beware of deſponding and diſtruſtful thoughts of God under ſharp afflictions. Some are ready to raze the foundation, quit their intereſt in God and the promiſes, and caſt away their hope and confidence, ſaying with Gideon, Judg. vi. 13. "Oh my lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this evil befallen us?" So David was ready to draw a haſty concluſion, Pſal. xxxi. 22. "I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes." But this was the effect of unbelief; for he that believeth, will not make haſte.

DIRECT. IV. *Under ſore trouble and diſtreſs, labour to exerciſe a ſtrong and lively faith.*

IT was a noble and heroic reſolution in that holy man, Job, under his ſingular trials, Job xiii. 15. "Though he ſlay me, yet will I truſt in him." *q. d.* Let my ſtrokes be never ſo ſore and heavy, yet I will not let go my grips of his words and promiſes; I will not raze theſe foundations of my hope. It was this way the Pſalmiſt kept himſelf from ſinking under his heavy burdens, Pſal. xxvii. 13. "I had

fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living." Conſider but a little the noble influence that faith hath to ſtrengthen and ſupport the ſoul under ſore trials.

1*ſt*, Faith grips to the great goſpel-promiſes of ſalvation in and through Jeſus Chriſt, and ſo ſecures the ſoul's main intereſt through eternity: which is enough to make the ſoul eaſy in every lot.

2*dly*, Faith views God in Chriſt at the helm in the greateſt ſtorm; and ſo it "endures as ſeeing him who is inviſible," Heb. xi. 27.

3*dly*, Faith caſts the ſoul's anchor upon the rock of ages, and ſtays itſelf upon God, and the faithful promiſes; whereby the ſoul is eaſed and diſburdened of its fears and melancholy apprehenſions, Pſal. lv. 22. Iſa. l. 10.

4*thly*, Faith brings new ſtrength and auxiliary ſupplies of grace from heaven, when the former ſupply is exhauſted and ſpent; whereof David had the ſweet experience, Pſal. xxvii. 13. As God doth plant and actuate grace in the ſoul, ſo he is pleaſed to come in with ſeaſonable ſupplies and reinforcements to the weak and decayed graces of his people, anſwerable to their preſent exigencies and preſſures: And thus he doth from time to time feed the believer's lamp with freſh oil, giving more faith, more love, more hope, and more deſires; and hereby he gives power to the faint, and ſtrengthens the things which remain, when ready to die.

5*thly*, Faith keeps the ſoul from ſinking under heavy trials, by bringing in former experiences of the power, mercy, and faithfulneſs of God to the afflicted ſoul: Hereby was the Pſalmiſt ſupported in diſtreſs, Pſal. xiii. 6. lxxxvii. 4. O! ſaith faith, remember what God hath done both for thy outward and inward man; he hath not only delivered thy body when in trouble, but he hath done great things for thy ſoul; he hath brought thee out of

a ſtate of black nature, entered into a covenant-relation with thee, made his goodneſs paſs before thee; he hath helped thee to pray, and many times hath heard thy prayers and thy tears. Hath he not formerly brought thee out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay, and put a new ſong in thy mouth, and made thee to reſolve, never to give way to ſuch unbelieving doubts and fears again? And how unbecoming is it for thee now to ſink in trouble?

6thly, Faith ſupports the ſoul, by giving it a pleaſant view and proſpect of a happy out-gate from all trouble; when it ſhall be admitted to ſee and dwell with Chriſt hereafter. Thus was Job ſupported in his great diſtreſs, Job xix. 25, 26, 27. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth; and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth.—Whom I ſhall ſee for myſelf, and mine eyes ſhall behold," &c. A believing view of the ſoul's meeting with its Redeemer, and receiving a crown of glory from him at laſt, is an excellent ſupport to a Chriſtian under the heavieſt affliction; and ſo it was to Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

7thly, Faith gives great ſupport, by the encouraging repreſentations it makes of Chriſt, and of his preſent concern for the believer while under affliction. As, for inſtance, *1ſt*, Faith repreſents Chriſt to a believer under trials, as ſympathizing with him under his diſtreſs, feeling his pain, hearing his groans, bearing his burdens, and ready to relieve him in his own appointed time, which it well becometh him to wait for.

2dly, Faith repreſents Chriſt as putting in his almighty arm under the believer's head, and conveying inviſible ſtrength to ſupport and hold him up under his greateſt preſſures.

3dly, Faith repreſents Chriſt as pleading the afflicted believer's cauſe with God, and anſwering

all the charges of the law, the challenges of conſcience, and accuſations of Satan againſt him.

4*thly*, Faith repreſents Chriſt as ſtanding by the furnace, as a refiner, where his gold is melting, carefully overſeeing the trials of his people, that they may work for their good; and ready to bring them out thereof, when they are ſufficiently purified from their droſs.

5*thly*, Faith repreſents Chriſt as ſmiling on his people under the croſs, whiſpering peace into their ears, and ſaying, "Well done, good and faithful ſervant."

DIRECT. V. *Labour to bear with patience whatever load of trouble the Lord appoints for you.*

WE will perhaps obſerve ſome who are ſtrangers to religion contentedly enduring very painful evils; and this they may do by virtue of a natural hardineſs and reſolution which ſome are endued with, or upon the account of arguments furniſhed by human prudence: This is only patience as a moral virtue which ſome attain to. But it is patience as a ſpiritual grace, or a fruit of the Spirit, which we muſt aim at under our trials; that we may bear them contentedly, from divine principles, to divine ends. Now, this grace of patience we muſt earneſtly beg from God under heavy afflictions, for it is only he that muſt work it in us; and therefore he is called the God of patience, Rom. xv. 5. And in order to your attaining of this grace, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations, which may be uſeful, through the Lord's bleſſing, for that end.

1*ſt*, Conſider the patience of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt under ſufferings inexpreſſibly greater than yours. When it pleaſed the Lord to bruiſe him, and to put him to grief, how patiently did he bear all!

according to that remarkable word, Iſa. liii. 7. "He was oppreſſed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he was brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter, and as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth." Now, Chriſt ſuffered as an example of patience, though it was not his chief end; and ſurely all the members of the body ſhould imitate the head in patience. Did your bleſſed Saviour patiently endure ſuch agonies and preſſures of wrath for you, and will you decline to undergo ſome ſhort pains or ſickneſs in obedience to his command?

2*dly*, Conſider God's ſovereignty over you. He is the great potter, and you are his clay: and, why may he not do with you what he pleaſeth? If your children offend you, you ſcourge them, and perhaps do it ſometimes without reaſon; yet how ill do you take it, when they refuſe to ſubmit? How will you drive and ſpur your horſes under you, and may be ſometimes unreaſonably! Yet they bear all quietly, and make no reſiſtance. Shall they take blows from their maſter; and will not you from your Maker, that has far more power over you? If any challenge you for your cruelty to your children or beaſts, you take it not well, becauſe you think you may do what you will with your own, and no man hath right to quarrel you: But, hath not God a greater property in you, than you in your children or cattle? And will you not patiently ſubmit to your wife and abſolute Sovereign?

3*dly*, Conſider thy ſin as the meritorious cauſe of all thy afflictions, however they may be. If thou haſt right thoughts of thy ſins and the aggravations thereof, thy mind may be compoſed to a patient ſubmiſſion to God's hand: If ſin be heavy on thee, all thy afflictions will be light. Luther gives us this as a reaſon why he ſlighted the rage of the Pope and Emperor, and all his outward trou-

bles; they are all little to me, becauſe ſin is ſo weighty on me. Hence it was that Paul complained not at all of his ſufferings, for as great as they were; but he cried out much for his ſins, Rom. vii. 24. "O wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death!" Senſe of ſin doth ſwallow up the ſenſe of affliction, as the ocean doth the little brooks. For, with whom ſhouldſt thou quarrel, but thyſelf, when thou bringeſt troubles on thyſelf. This conſideration ſhould bring thee to reſolve and ſay with the prophet, Mic. vii. 9. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him.

4*thly*, Conſider how ſharp ſoever the pains are, you are called to bear, yet they fall infinitely ſhort of what you have juſtly deſerved at God's hands. It is of his infinite mercy that death and everlaſting deſtruction hath not been your portion long ſince; and that you are not now roaring under the extremity of his indignation in the bottomleſs pit, together with the devil and his angels. And conſequently, whatſoever falls ſhort of this, is truly a great mercy; and is ſo far from being ground of quarreling, that the greateſt ſufferer on this ſide hell hath juſt cauſe to admire God's clemency in dealing more favourably with him than he hath deſerved.

5*thly*, Compare thy caſe with others that have been or preſently are in diſtreſs. Do not ſay there is none ſo hardly dealt with as thou art; for thou knoweſt not the affliction of others. Conſider duly the trials of that eminent ſaint Job, in all the circumſtances thereof, and ſee if you can ſay, that your ſorrow is ever ſo great as his ſorrow was. Again, compare your caſe with that of the damned in hell, who ly and fry in endleſs and ceaſeleſs flames, ſo that they have no reſt day nor night, but the ſmoke of their torment aſcends for ever: and think what a bleſſing it is, that you are yet in a ſtate of ſalvation,

and not delivered over to theſe everlaſting burnings, which were the due demerits of your ſins, and to which you might long ago have been juſtly condemned, had it not been for the patience and long-ſuffering of God, who waiteth to be gracious to ſinners. When you conſider theſe things, inſtead of being diſſatisfied with the divine diſpenſations, you have cauſe to bleſs God, that matters are not worſe with you; and that you are kept out of hell to this day, where thouſands, no more guilty than you, are preſently roaring in endleſs deſperation.

Unto theſe conſiderations I ſhall ſubjoin ſome few helps or advices, in order to the attaining of patience under ſore troubles. 1. Labour to get pardon of ſin and peace with God ſecured to thy ſoul, and this will enable you to bear the heavieſt croſs with patience. Hence it was that Luther cried, "Smite, Lord, as thou wilt, I take all in good part, ſeeing my ſins are pardoned! O pardon of ſin is the crowning bleſſing! therefore I will bear any thing, I will ſwallow up quarrelling into admiring; I will welcome the pruning knife, ſeeing there is no fear of the bloody axe to fell me down."

2. Labour to ſee God's hand in thy affliction. Do not, like the dog, ſnarl at the ſtone, but look up to the hand that throws it. And ſurely a view of the hand of a holy God, may ſerve to calm all the boiſterous waves of thy corruption; ſo did it with David, Pſal. xxxix. 9. "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it." When he looked to the inſtruments and ſecond cauſes of his afflictions, his heart waxed hot, and the fire of his inward paſſion began to burn and break out; but when he once eſpied God's hand and ſeal to the warrant for his correction, he became ſilent, and patiently ſubmitted to the divine will.

3. Get a humble and ſelf-denied frame of ſpirit, that you may have low thoughts of yourſelf, and

of all your attainments whatſoever. A proud man cannot think of ſubmitting to the divine will, but will break before he bow. Hence we ſee a vaſt difference betwixt a proud Pharaoh and an humble Eli under the rod: the one ſays, "Who is the Lord, that I ſhould obey him?" But the other ſaith, "It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good."

4. Get love to Jeſus Chriſt. Love is an enduring principle, 1 Cor. xiii. 7. it "endureth all things." It makes the ſoul, like the kindly child, draw nearer to Chriſt, the more it is beaten.

5. Interpret God's ways and dealings with you always in the beſt ſenſe. And, *Laſtly*, Be earneſt in prayer, that God may conquer your rebellious will, and ſubdue theſe mutinous riſings of heart within you againſt himſelf.

DIRECT. VI. *Beware of envying wicked men, when you ſee them in health and proſperity.*

THE Pſalmiſt, when he was chaſtened every morning, and in great adverſity, was liable to this evil, Pſ. lxxiii. 3. "I was envious at the fooliſh, when I ſaw the proſperity of the wicked." Corrupt nature doth ſtrongly incline us to this ſinful diſpoſition, eſpecially in the day of ſore affliction; for "The ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy," James iv. 5. But did we rightly conſider the ſtate of wicked men, we would ſee greater ground to pity than envy them in the moſt proſperous condition; why? "The proſperity of fools ſhall deſtroy them," Prov. i. 32. It makes them forget God, and turn hardened and ſecure in ſin, which haſtens their ruin. Who would envy a malefactor's going up a high ladder, and being mounted above the reſt of the people, when it is only for a little, and in order to his being turned over and hanged? This is juſt the caſe of wicked men, who are mounted up high

in proſperity; for it is ſo, only that they may be caſt down deeper into deſtruction. Obſerve that word, Pſal. xxxvii. 1, 2. "Fret not thyſelf becauſe of evil-doers, neither be thou envious againſt the workers of iniquity; for they ſhall ſoon be cut down like graſs," &c. And that word, Pſal. xcii. 7. "When the wicked ſpring as the graſs, and when all the workers of iniquity do flouriſh, it is that they ſhall be deſtroyed for ever." It would be a brutiſh thing to envy an ox of his high and ſweet paſture, when he is only thereby fitted for the day of ſlaughter. Who would have envied the beaſts of old, the garlands and ribbons with which the heathens adorned them, when they went to be ſacrificed? Theſe external ornaments of health, wealth, pleaſures and preferments wherewith wicked men are endowed, cannot make their ſtate happy, nor change their natures to the better. Whatever appearance theſe things make in the eyes of the world, they are but like a noiſome dunghill covered with ſcarlet, as vile and loathſome in God's ſight as ever. How quickly is the beauty of earthly things blaſted! "The triumphing of the wicked is ſhort," Job xx 5. They live in pleaſures on the earth for a while, but God ſets them in ſlippery places, from whence they ſoon ſlide into perpetual pain and anguiſh. They have a ſhort time of mirth, but they ſhall have an eternity of mourning. The longer their proſperity is, their ſins are the greater, and their ſufferings will be more grievous. But, O believer, it is in mercy to thee, that God doth hedge up thy way with thorns, that thou mayeſt not find thy paths; whilſt he turns the wicked looſe, and ſuffers them to ſtray and wander whither they will, to their eternal ruin. God takes this method with thee to make thee meet for an inheritance, and prepare you for a crown of glory; but he takes a contrary way with the wicked, to fit them for deſtruc-

tion: therefore you ought not to be fretful under his hand, but thankful. We read of Queen Elizabeth, when ſhe was in priſon, how ſhe envied the poor milk-maid that was paſſing by, and would have thought herſelf happy to have been in her condition: But, had that afflicted princeſs known the glorious reign of forty-four years ſhe was ſoon to enter upon, ſhe would not have repined at the happineſs of ſo mean a perſon. But, O afflicted believer, it is not a glorious reign for a ſet number of years, that is provided for thee; it is even a reign with glorious Chriſt, thy Redeemer, for ever and ever: And haſt thou any ground to be diſcontented or envious?

DIRECT. VII. *Guard againſt repining complaints and diſcontented murmurings againſt the providence of God, under heavy ſickneſs and affliction.*

WE ſee, the murmurers and complainers are claſſed with theſe that walk after their own luſts, Jude 16. I know the people of God are liable to murmuring and impatience alſo under affliction; but there is a great difference betwixt them and the wicked. I will have occaſion to ſpeak of believer's murmurings afterwards, when I come to ſpeak of their caſe in particular; but here I ſhall handle the ſin of murmuring in general, and as it appears mainly in the unregenerate, under heavy affliction.

This ſin of murmuring is the froth of impatience, and ſcum of diſcontentment; it is firſt cheriſhed by repining thoughts, and then vented by unſuitable complaints and expoſtulations, taxing the adminiſtration of providence, as if God dealt too hard with us. Our very thoughts are audible with God, yea, as loud in his ears, as words are in ours; but it is yet worſe, when repining thoughts are not cruſhed, but ſuffered to break out into words, tending to the diſhonour of God.

Queſt. But is it altogether unlawful to complain of affliction, whatever be our caſe?

Anſ. Humble complaints are not murmurings, nor ſinful in themſelves; otherwiſe there would be no room for prayer, and for ſpreading out our diſtreſſed caſe before the Lord. We find God's children making complaints in affliction; but then they do not complain of God, but to God, with a humble enquiry into the cauſe and meaning of his diſpenſations, and laying all the blame upon themſelves, as did Job, Chap. x. 1, 2. "I will leave my complaint upon myſelf; I will ſpeak in the bitterneſs of my ſoul, I will ſay unto God, do not condemn me; ſhew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me." Thus the bleſſed Son of God himſelf did in his diſtreſs, when he cried, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" But there we may obſerve, he complains to God, not of God; he hath not a hard word or thought of God, but expreſſeth a holy confidence in God, "My God, my God?" He hath two words of faith for one word of fear. He humbly enquires into the cauſe of the diſpenſation, and deſires to bring his will to God, not that God ſhould bring down his will to him: "If it be poſſible (ſays he) let this cup paſs;" however, glorify thy name, provide for thy own glory, and do with me what thou pleaſeſt. In this matter our Lord doth ſet himſelf as an example of patience to us, teaching us to beware of impatient murmuring and quarrelling with God's providence in our affliction; which many times we are guilty of, either when we harbour harſh thoughts of God's dealings, or break forth into raſh and unadviſed ſpeeches; when we charge God fooliſhly, and complain either of too much ſeverity, as Ezek. xviii. 2. 25. or of too long delay, as Iſa. xlix. 14. or when our complaints are mixed with unbelief and diſtruſt, as Pſal. lxxviii. 19. or when we complain more of

our puniſhment than we do of our ſin, and nothing will ſatisfy us but deliverance from trouble.

Now, to deter you from theſe murmurings and complaints in trouble, I ſhall lay before you the following conſiderations; 1*ſt*, They who deſerve worſt do commonly complain and murmur moſt, and are moſt ready to think they are hardly dealt with. The unthankful Iſraelites were ſtill murmuring. Ambitious Abſalom was diſcontented. Bloody Haman, in midſt of all his greatneſs, cries out, "What doth all this avail me?" But humble Jacob ſaith, he was not worthy of the leaſt of all the mercies and truth which God had ſhewed him. And holy Job bleſſes God, and patiently ſubmits, when he took from him, as well as when he gave him.

2*dly*, Murmuring is a ſin that God takes ſpecial notice of, and looks on it as an injury and affront done immediately againſt himſelf, Numb. xiv. 27. "I have heard the murmurings of the children of Iſrael, which they murmur againſt me." He that gives ear to the groans of his own Spirit, doth alſo hear the grumblings of thine, and will reckon with thee for them.

3*dly*, It can no ways benefit or relieve us in diſtreſs. I may ſay of ſinful complaining (as Chriſt of ſinful care) Which of you, by complaining, can add one cubit to his ſtature? What eaſe or relief can you get by contending with God? Nay, inſtead of eaſing you of your burden, it will make it the heavier; as a child, the more he ſtruggles with his parents, he is the more beaten. The Iſraelites were once within eleven days journey of Canaan; but by their murmurings they provoked God to lead them forty years march in the wilderneſs before they could reach it.

4*thly*, Whatever be your diſtreſs, there is no juſt ground for complaints, whilſt thou haſt thy life for a prey. Remember that word of the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 39. "Wherefore doth a living man com-

plain; a man for the puniſhment of his ſins?" A man living, a man upon the earth, a man out of hell, hath no cauſe to complain, whatever be his affliction. For, let him compare his ſin and puniſhment together, he will find there is no proportion: ſin is a tranſgreſſion againſt the infinite God; puniſhment is but an affliction upon the finite creature: ſin ſtrikes at the very being of God; but puniſhment only at the comfort of the creature. So that whatever your puniſhment be, you have more cauſe to give thanks than to complain, and to ſay with Ezra, "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." It might have been a thouſand times worſe, if ſtrict juſtice had been the rule: "It is of the Lord's mercies we are not conſumed."

5*thly*, When you murmur under ſickneſs, you quarrel with the meſſenger of that ſovereign God, who gave you your lives, and can take them again when he thinks fit; and we know meſſengers ought not to be maltreated or abuſed, whatever be their commiſſion, and far leſs when they are ſent upon a good deſign. Now, if you conſider the deſign of this meſſenger and his errand to you, inſtead of fretting and quarrelling at his coming, you ought rather to bleſs God that ſends ſuch a ſuitable harbinger and forerunner to tell you that death is approaching, and that he vouchſafes to take ſo much pains on you, to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone, by long-continued trouble; when he might have ſeized you in a violent manner, and driven you away by main force, without uſing any means to obtain your conſent. Have not many, who were moſt unwilling to die, at the beginning of a ſickneſs, been brought, by the increaſe and continuance of it, to be well ſatisfied to leave the world, and long to be with Chriſt! And was not this for their advantage.

6*thly*, Conſider the great evil and ſinfulneſs of

impatient murmurings, complaints and quarrellings under affliction.

1. Murmuring hath in it much unbelief and diſtruſt of God, Pſal. cvi. 24, 25. "They believed not his word, but murmured in their tents." They could not believe that the wilderneſs was the way to Canaan, that God would provide and furniſh a table for them there, and relieve them in all their ſtraits. So it is with us in trouble; we quarrel with God's providence, becauſe we do not believe his promiſes; we do not believe that this can be conſiſtent with love, nor can work for good in the end.

2. It hath in it unthankfulneſs. While we complain of one affliction, we overlook a thouſand mercies. The Iſraelites murmured ſo for what they had not, that they unthankfully forgot all they had. Whereas a thankful perſon is ſo far from fretting that God doth not give him every thing, that he wonders that God ſhould give him any thing. "I am leſs than the leaſt of all thy mercies," ſaid Jacob. 'We are perplexed,' ſaid Paul, 'but not in deſpair.' We have God to go to, which is matter of praiſe. But the murmurer unthankfully overlooks all his preſent, and forgets all his former mercies; and gives not God thanks for any thing. Becauſe God removes his comforts, his health, ſtrength and eaſe for a time; all the years he formerly enjoyed them, though moſt undeſervedly, are buried in oblivion.

3. It implies much pride and ſelf conceit. He that complains of God's dealings, ſecretly applauds his own deſervings. "Only by pride comes contention." When men have a conceit of themſelves, they pick quarrels with God's providence, being apt to think they deſerve better treatment at his hands; whereas the humble ſoul is ſenſible he deſerves nothing but wrath, and therefore lays his hand on his mouth when the Lord afflicts him.

4. It involves men into rebellion againſt God. When God ſtrikes men for ſin, murmurers fly in his face and kick againſt his ſtrokes, like bullocks unaccuſtomed to the yoke. They, in ſome reſpect, reſemble that deſperate apoſtate Julian, of whom it is written, that he ſhot up his darts againſt heaven, when he was in diſtreſs. They fulfil that word Prov. xix. 3. "The fooliſhneſs of man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth againſt the Lord." The repining heart boils with rage againſt God, and his diſpenſations, like thoſe wicked Jews, when hungry and hardly beſtead, Iſaiah viii. 21. "They ſhall fret themſelves, and curſe their king and their God, and look upward."

5. It imports much impenitency and unhumbledneſs for ſin; and that we have ſeen little of the intrinſic evil of ſin, and of our ill-deſervings for it. Can we truly believe that our ſins deſerve hell-fire, and yet impatiently repine at ſickneſs and leſſer ſtrokes upon our bodies?

6. It includes much atheiſm and blaſphemy againſt God and his infinite perfections, in ſeveral reſpects.

(1.) By our impatient murmurings, we either virtually deny that things here below are governed by God's providence; or elſe,

(2.) We tax his providence with unrighteouſneſs in the management thereof; as if God did withhold from us what is due, or inflict on us what we have not deſerved. Oh what atheiſm is this! "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" May he not, upon the juſteſt ground, anſwer every murmur as Mat. xx. 13. "Friend, I do thee no wrong."

(3.) We, in effect, graſp at the ſovereignty, and uſurp the throne of the moſt high God, and would have the diſpoſal of things in our hands; yea, we preſume to ſummon God to our bar, to give account of his adminiſtrations, when we take upon us to quarrel any of his diſpenſations. Alas! we little

remember the woe that is pronounced againſt ſ
doing, Iſ. xlv. 9, "Woe unto him that ſtriveth wit
his Maker: ſhall the clay ſay to him that faſhioneth
it, What makeſt thou? Or thy work, He hath n
hands?"

(4.) We, on the matter, take ſin's part again
God; we either juſtify it, or extenuate its evil, an
alledge by our murmurings that God is unrighteou
to puniſh ſuch ſmall ſins with ſuch heavy afflictions

(5.) We virtually queſtion God's power to reac
us a greater blow, when we enter the liſts wit
God, and contend with our Maker; is it not in effe
to ſay, we know how to reduce him to our terms
or make our party good againſt him.

(6.) We diſparage his wiſdom, and take upo
us to be his counſellors, as if we could inſtruct hi
better in the management of affairs, and teach hi
what is fit to be done with his creatures. Hear wha
the Lord ſaith, Job xi. 2. "Shall he that contendeth
with the Almighty, inſtruct him? He that reproveth
God, let him anſwer it." Murmuring is a reproving
of God, and a charging him with ill conduct, ſaying
in effect, with Abſalom, "There is none that takes
care to order men's affairs: O that I were king of
the world! then ſhould things be better ordered
than now they are." So blaſphemous is the lan-
guage of our impatient murmurings. Let us,
therefore, be aſhamed of them, and abhor ourſelves
in duſt and aſhes, for our fooliſhneſs in cenſuring
the actions of the only wiſe God. Shall a poor,
ignorant paſſenger, that underſtands not the uſe
of the compaſs, be angry that the ſkilful pilot will
not ſteer the veſſel according to his pleaſure.

(7.) We hereby ſlight and undervalue the riches
of divine goodneſs, of which we have formerly
ſhared, and do ſtill partake: Like fooliſh and peeviſh
children, if they cannot have their will, or get ſome
thing they want, do preſently throw away the

ings which they have, ſaying, with unthankful aman, "All this availeth me nothing."

Laſtly, I might add, this ſin hath ſome reſemblance to hell itſelf; for there the damned do continually vex and torment themſelves with their fretting and impatient thoughts, which cauſe them to break out in fearful rage and blaſphemy againſt God.

Queſt. But how ſhall we prevent ſuch diſcontented murmurings? for ſome times trouble is ſo great, we cannot bear it patiently.

Anſw. God hath given you reaſon, to bear rule over paſſion, and furniſhed you with ſtrong arguments to prevail againſt diſcontents. Why then ſhould you be ſo brutiſh as to dethrone reaſon, and ſuffer ſenſe and paſſion to govern you? Are you not Chriſtians, and ſworn to live according to the rules of that excellent religion? Why then do you act ſo contrary to your profeſſion and engagements?

Beſides what I have already ſaid, I ſhall add ſome few remedies more, for the cure of this murmuring diſtemper.

1*ſt*, Look on thy murmurings as worſe than all thy pains and troubles whatſoever; thoſe are but afflictions from God, but theſe are ſins grievous and provoking unto God.

2*dly*, Remember the judgments which murmuring hath brought down from heaven upon ſinners. Miriam was ſmitten with a leproſy for it: Dathan and Abiram were ſwallowed up alive: fiery ſerpents, plagues, and excluſion from Canaan, were Iſrael's judgments for this ſin, 1 Cor. x. 10. "Neither murmur ye, as ſome of them murmured, and were deſtroyed of the deſtroyer." The arrows which murmurers ſhoot againſt heaven, do ſoon return upon their own heads.

3*dly*, Whatever thy ſufferings are for the preſent, yet ſtill believe thy caſe might be worſe. The troubles that light upon the body, are nothing

ſo terrible as theſe that light on the ſoul, Prov. xviii. 14. "A wounded ſpirit who can bear?" They are nothing to what thy innocent Saviour ſuffered upon the croſs, yea, nothing to what ſome martyrs have endured for the truths of the goſpel.

4*thly*, Get very low thoughts of yourſelf, and a deep ſenſe of ill-deſervings for ſin. O! ſhould a fire-brand of hell murmur for temporal afflictions?

5*thly*, Be ſtill examining thyſelf, rather than cenſuring God. Doth God ſeem to neglect thee? Say, Alas! it is moſt juſt: Have not I neglected him, and given a deaf ear to his calls many a day?

6*thly*, Bear in mind that theſe troubles will not laſt; there is a great change near: either they will iſſue in life or death. If life, you will be aſhamed you had no more patience when ſick: if death, then, if you belong to Chriſt, it will give a finiſhing ſtroke to all troubles and complaints, and heaven will make amends for all. But if you be not in Chriſt, whatever your afflictions be now, troubles a thouſand times worſe are abiding you in another world: death will turn thy croſſes into pure unmixed curſes; and, then, how gladly wouldſt thou return to thy former afflicted ſtate, and purchaſe it at any rate, were there any poſſibility of ſuch a return? You now fly out in paſſion, and ſay, you are not able to bear what you complain of: but conſider, if you will not obediently bear God's rod now; you will then bear more, whether you will or not; and God will make you able to bear more, when there will never be any hopes of relief.

7*thly*, Study to give vent to thy ſorrows in a way of prayer and praiſe. An oven ſtopped is the more hot within; but the breath of prayer or praiſe gives eaſe. If we did complain more to God, we ſhould complain leſs of God. What a mercy is it, that you have ſtill God to go to? Improve the privilege, con-

feſs unworthineſs, and beg the grace of patience and ſubmiſſion out of Chriſt's full treaſures. Be alſo praiſing God for mercies received; and however bad thy caſe is, bleſs God it is not in hell, you are in the land of hope.

CHAP. III.

Containing ſpecial Directions to the Children of God, when under ſickneſs or any other affliction.

DIRECT. I. *Let Believers eſpecially guard againſt fainting or deſponding under God's afflicting hand.*

THIS is an exhortation which God in a peculiar manner directs unto his children, Heb. xii. 5. "My ſon, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him." There are two extremes mentioned, deſpiſing and fainting; I ſpoke of the firſt before, in *Chap.* II. *Direct.* II. It is a duty to feel our affliction, but a ſin to faint under it. God's people may be ſaid to faint under their trials, when they ſink, or deſpond, or give way to fretting or repining under them. In the preceding Direction I ſpoke of the evil of murmuring in general; here I ſhall ſpeak of believers fainting in particular.

1. I ſhall enquire whence their fainting under affliction doth proceed.

2. Bring ſome arguments and helps againſt this evil.

3. Anſwer ſome objections of fainting believers.

I. As to the *firſt*, Whence theſe faintings in believers do proceed: *1ſt*, They proceed from the grievouſneſs of their affliction, and the heavineſs of their burden, which is ready to amaze and ſtagger their thoughts, and ſink their ſpirits with fear and deſpondency. Hence did the Pſalmiſt complain,

Pſalm lx. 3. "Thou haſt ſhewed thy people hard things: thou haſt made us to drink the wine of aſtoniſhment." And, Pſal. lxix. 2. "I ſink in deep mire, where there is no ſtanding; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me."

2*dly*, From the ſmallneſs of their ſpiritual ſtrength, and, particularly, the weakneſs of their faith, Prov. xxiv. 10. "If thou faint in the day of adverſity, thy ſtrength is ſmall." Whence was it that Peter fainted and began to ſink in the waters, but from the weakneſs of his faith, Mat. xiv. 30, 31. We know not our ſtrength till it be tried. Sometimes we have ſuch a conceit of it, that we think, like Peter, we can walk upon a ſea of trouble: but, in a little, behold! ſome ſurpriſing blaſt aſſaults our confidence; and then we faint, and cry out with him, "Help, Lord, or elſe we periſh." Peter reckoned only upon the ſea, but did not think of the boiſterous wind; and he looked to his dangers, more than to the power that was to carry him through them.

3*dly*, From their impatience of delay. When deliverance is long a coming, it is not eaſy to wait God's leiſure, and to keep the heart from deſperate concluſions, Pſalm xxxi. 22. "I ſaid in my haſte, I am cut off from before thine eyes."

4*thly*, From the power of Satan's temptations, and furious aſſaults. When Satan is let looſe, in time of affliction, to throw in his fiery darts, the believer is ready to faint, and ſay, as Pſalm lxxvii. 8. "Is his mercy clean gone for ever?"

5*thly*, From their wearieſome conflicts with a body of death, and an ill heart. Theſe, in time of affliction, do add affliction to the afflicted.

6*thly*, From long and great deſertions. When God hides his face from the believer in affliction, his ſoul faints under it, as in Iſa. xliv. 14. "Zion hath ſaid, The Lord hath forſaken me! My God hath forgotten me?"

7*thly*, From the conſciouſneſs of their guilt, and ill-deſervings before God, upon the account of old ſins, abuſe of mercies, and untender walking before God. Affliction doth revive old ſins, as with Job, xiii. 26. "Thou writeſt bitter things againſt me, and makeſt me to poſſeſs the ſins of my youth." His old ſins, and guilt of his youthful follies, now revived upon him, and ſat cloſe to his conſcience, which occaſioned his fainting under his burden.

Laſtly, Great afflictions do frequently cloud the believer's graces and evidences for heaven, and diſcover their corruptions: whereby they are made to ſink under their trial. They ſee more unbelief, impatience, diſtruſt and enmity to God in them, than they ſaw before; they ſee more of the weakneſs of grace, and of their want of faith and love, than before; whereby they are ſometimes tempted to raze the foundation, and ſay all their former attainments were but deluſions, and their profeſſions but hypocriſy. Theſe things make afflictions ſometimes very heavy and ſinking to the people of God.

II. In the next place, for preventing and helping this evil of fainting under affliction, let believers conſider,

1*ſt*, Theſe heavy trials are all needful for you. Deep waters are not more needful to carry a ſhip into the haven, than great afflictions are to carry the veſſels of our ſouls into the port if bliſs. Strong winds and thunder are frightful, but they are neceſſary to purge the air. One of the ſharpeſt calamities that ever befel Iſrael was the Babyloniſh captivity, yet even this was in mercy to them: for the Lord ſaith, Jer. xxiv. 5. "I have ſent them out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good." Strange! of free men to be made priſoners, and that in a ſtrange land among the heathen; to be removed far from their own houſes, vineyards, friends, nay, and from the temple of God and his ordinances;

and yet all this for their good! Why, they were hereby effectually weaned and broke off from their darling ſin of idolatry.

2*dly*, Conſider, that your affliction, however heavy it be, will ſoon have an end; Iſa. lvii. 16. "For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the ſpirit ſhould fail before me, and the ſouls which I have made." The goldſmith will not let his gold lye longer in the furnace than it is purified. The wicked have a ſea of wrath to drink! but, O drooping believer, take comfort; you have but a cup of affliction, which will ſoon be exhauſted. The time is near, when all thy trials ſhall have an end: In heaven there is no croſs, no complaint, no tears, nor ſorrows for ever!

3*dly*, Faint not, O child of God; for theſe afflictions are all the hell which thou ſhalt have; thou haſt nothing to fear hereafter. Judas had two hells; one in time, by terror in his conſcience; another after this life, which endures to eternity; but all the hell that a believer hath, is this light affliction, which is but for a moment.

4*thly*, Deſponding or murmuring in affliction, is evil in any, but in none is it ſo bad as in the children of God. It doth very ill become their covenants, their privileges, their hopes. Have they reſigned and given up themſelves and all they have to God by a ſolemn covenant; and will they fret, when he diſpoſeth of them? Did thou not ſay, O believer, in the day when thy heart was ſtung with ſin, and the terrors of God made thee afraid, O let me have Jeſus Chriſt for my Saviour and portion, and I will be content, tho' I ſhould be ſtriken with boils, like Job, or beg my bread with Lazarus? Now God tries thee if thou wilt ſtand to thy word: O beware of retracting. Hath not that ſoul enough, who hath an all-ſufficient God for his portion? If God be thine in covenant, that comprehends all things.

5thly, It doth diſcompoſe and unfit the ſoul for any duty. It is ill ſailing in a ſtorm, ſo it is ill praying when the heart is in a ſtorm of diſquiet and deſpondency.

6thly, Your fainting under affliction, and carrying as if the conſolations of God were ſmall, is enough to ſtumble others at religion, and make them calll the truth of it in queſtion. When we ſee thoſe that profeſs religion, and have oft declared that their rejoicing is in Chriſt Jeſus, as their portion, begin to ſink and deſpond under outward afflictions; O may not they be tempted to ſay, Where is the truth of religion? Where are theſe divine ſupports and conſolations we have often heard of?

Laſtly, O then ſeek to get faith revived, and ſtrengthened, and reſolve with Job, to truſt in God, though he ſhould ſlay you. This would be of noble uſe to keep the heart from ſinking under preſſures of affliction, as the Pſalmiſt found it, to his ſweet experience, Pſalm xxvii. 13. "I had fainted, unleſs I had believed to ſee the goodneſs of the Lord in the land of the living."

III. I come to anſwer ſome objections or excuſes of fainting believers, which they do commonly alledge as the ground of their diſcouragement in their afflictions.

Object. I. "O (faith one) my afflictions are not ordinary; they are ſore preſſures I lye under, and of various kinds too."

Anſ. 1. O believer, God hath taken the ordering of your lot in his own hand, and he knows what is fitteſt for you. Should a man be left to carve out his own portion, it would ſoon appear he would be his own greateſt enemy. We would all be for the dainties of pleaſure and proſperity, which would not be for our ſouls health; as children think green fruit the beſt diet, becauſe they pleaſe their taſte; but their parents are wiſer to keep them from them.

2*dly*, God may ſee you have many and ſtrong luſts to be ſubdued, and that you need many and ſore afflictions to bring them down. Your pride and obſtinacy of heart may be ſtrong, your diſtempers deeply rooted, and therefore the phyſic muſt be proportioned to them; as with the Iſraelites, Pſalm cvii. 11, 12. "Becauſe they rebelled againſt the word of God, and contemned the counſels of the Moſt High, therefore he brought down their hearts with labour." O believer, your God and Father, that hath the mixing of your cup and portion, is a wiſe and ſkilful phyſician, who knows your conſtitution and your need, 1 Pet. i. 6. "If need be you are in heavineſs through manifold temptations." And as he knows your need, ſo he underſtands your ſtrength, 1 Cor. x. 13. "Faithful is he, that will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able."

3*dly*, God ſends great and ſore troubles, that you may have the more experience of God's wiſdom and mercy in your ſupport and deliverance: Pſal. lxxi. 20. "Thou which haſt ſhewed me great and ſore troubles, ſhalt quicken and bring me up again from the depths of the earth."

Object. II. "But (ſaith one) my affliction is ſingular; there was never any in my condition."

Anſ. 1*ſt*, It is very ordinary for every man in great diſtreſs, to reckon his caſe ſingular, becauſe he feels beſt what is neareſt himſelf, but is a ſtranger to what his neighbour feels.

2*dly*, This ſuggeſtion is one of Satan's devices, that he may tempt a child of God to queſtion his Father's love; but he is a liar, and not to be credited in what he ſaith: for others of your brethren have been afflicted in the ſame kind and degree, if not worſe, 1 Pet. v. 9. "Knowing that the ſame afflictions are accompliſhed in your brethren that are in the world."

3*dly*, Whatever your caſe be, you muſt own your

ſufferings are not ſo great as your ſins. The trials of God's people in Babylon were ſingular; yet Ezra owns, Ez. ix. 13. "Thou haſt puniſhed us leſs than our iniquities deſerve." If our provoked Judge ſhall in his clemency ſend us to Babylon inſtead of hell, we have no cauſe to complain.

4*thly*, But O child of God, however thou complaineſt of the ſingularity of affliction now, all ſuch complaints will be taken out of thy mouth ere long, and the time is near when thou ſhalt be made to wonder at the wiſdom of God in guiding ſo many ſons and daughters to glory, through ſuch a variety of trials, exerciſes, afflictions, and temptations: and made to ſay as theſe in Mark vii. 37. "He hath done all things well."

Object. III. "But (ſaith one) my affliction is long continued, and I ſee no outgate; and how can I but faint under it?"

Anſ. 1*ſt*, It is not ſo long as your ſins deſerve; for in juſtice it might be for ever, it might be "The worm that never dieth, and the fire that is never quenched."

2*dly*, Your ſufferings on earth are not ſo long as your reward in heaven, Rom. viii. 18. "For I reckon that the ſufferings of this preſent time, are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed in us."

3*dly*, No length or continuance of affliction here ſhould hinder a believer's comfort, if we take a view of our head and pattern Jeſus Chriſt. How long did his afflictions continue! No end was put to them till he cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghoſt. Though he was the Son of God, yet from the hour of his birth to the moment of his death, from his manger to his croſs, his afflictions ſtill encreaſed, and he ended his days in the midſt of them. Now, Chriſt is the head of the church, and your great repreſentative, O believers, into a conformity

with whom you are predeſtinated: be content then to be like your head and pattern, to have no eaſe or reſt from afflictions till you lye down in the grave; it is "there the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary be at reſt," Job iii. 17.

4thly, Remember that your afflictions are a part of Chriſt's croſs, which your loving Redeemer hath contrived for your good, and hath appointed you to take up and bear with him. Now love to Chriſt ſhould keep you from wearying to bear off a part of Chriſt's croſs, eſpecially when he himſelf bears the heavieſt end of it, nay, bears you and your croſs both. It is ſaid of Jacob, Gen. xxix. 20. that "he ſerved ſeven years for Rachel, and they ſeemed to him but a few days, for the love he had to her." And, ſhall not we endure a few years affliction for our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who lived a life of ſorrows, and died a curſed death for our ſakes? Had we more love to Chriſt, his croſs would not be ſo tedious to us.

5thly, Should it not be good news to thee, that there is a deliverance for thee at death from all thy troubles, and that this time is haſtening and very near? Be not anxious for an outgate here in time, for that ſavours too much of unbelief and love to the world. Doth it not ſeem to ſay, that you would be better content to be turned back again to the ſtormy tumultuous ſea of this world, than to be ſafely and ſpeedily landed at your reſt above? That you would be more happy in a few temporal mercies on earth, than to enter upon your eternal inheritance with Chriſt?

Object. IV. No wonder (ſaith one) that I faint under my affliction, for I want theſe conſolations and ſupports which God uſeth to reſerve for afflicted ſaints.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, If God be preſently chaſtening you for your ſins, you muſt be content to feel the bitterneſs

of ſin, before you can taſte the ſweetneſs of God's conſolations.

2*dly*, Can you ſay that your afflictions have duly humbled you, and fitted you for comfort? Have they yet brought you to a willingneſs to quit and renounce all your beloved ſins, and even to part with all your earthly enjoyments and comforts at God's call, and be content with God in Chriſt alone for your happineſs and portion? If this be not done, your afflictions have not had their due effect, to prepare you for comfort, and till then you cannot expect it. You are in the hands of a wiſe and ſkilful phyſician, who will not too haſtily heal and bind up your ſores, ſo as to let them ſpoil and feſter at the bottom.

3*dly*, Though you have no ſenſible conſolations from God in your preſent trials, yet you muſt ſtill labour to keep in the way of duty, and live by faith on his promiſes. Believe firmly that God is good to them that love him; and that there is forgiveneſs with him to the penitent ſinner. And if all ſtars withdraw their light whilſt you are in God's way, then aſſure yourſelf the ſun is near the riſing.

Object. V. But my affliction is ſuch, that it diſables me from duty, and makes me uſeleſs and unprofitable; and this makes me faint under my burden.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, God ſends afflictions never to unfit, but to quicken you for the performance of duty; to make you repent more thoroughly, pray more fervently, flee to Chriſt more earneſtly, and mind heaven more intenſely.

2*dly*, If it be your duty to others, that your affliction incapacitates you for; then, remember, if God, in his providence diſable you for that, it is no longer a duty incumbent on you, and you muſt not grudge if God take you off, and put others in your room. God is a free and ſovereign agent, and will be tied to no mean or inſtrument whatſoever for carrying on his work.

DIRECT. II. *Let the Children of God be exemplary in patience and ſubmiſſion to God under their afflictions.*

I Treated of patience, and gave ſome motives and helps to it, to all afflicted perſons in general, *Chap.* II. *Direct.* V. But here I ſhall bring ſome ſpecial arguments to Chriſtian patience and ſubmiſſion proper for believers. You that God hath done ſo much for beyond others, ought to ſhine in this grace of patience, and be examples to others for it, when God chaſtens you, though with very ſore affliction.

1ſt, Study patience under affliction; for it is the common path and beaten road to heaven, that all the ſaints have trod, who have gone thither before you. Behold the print of the foot-ſteps of all the cloud of witneſſes in this road; and, would ye be ſingular, and chuſe a way of your own? When God ſolemnly renewed his covenant with Abraham and he had prepared the ſacrifice whereby it was to be ratified and confirmed, God made a ſmoking furnace to paſs between the pieces of the ſacrifice, Gen. xv. 17. to let him know that there was a furnace of affliction attending the covenant of grace and peace, and all that entered thereinto. God has appointed that all the ſtones of the ſpiritual and heavenly building ſhall be hewed and poliſhed by affliction here; and we are not to think that God's ordinary way will be changed for us. We muſt not think to walk on roſes, when ſo many worthies have marched through briers and thorns to heaven.

2dly, Conſider, that the greateſt afflictions you meet with, are conſiſtent with the love of God, nay, ſpring from his love to you. Every ſanctified rod is a gift and royal donation ſent by the hand of God to you, Phil. i. 29. "To you it is given in behalf of Chriſt, not only to believe on him, but alſo to

ſuffer for his ſake." Now, ſurely, if we look on the croſs as a gift, an honour, an advantage, and bleſſing, we would bear it patiently, Pſal. xciv. 12. 'Bleſſed is the man whom thou chaſteneſt, O Lord.' O believer, thy temporal croſs comes from the ſame love that thy eternal crown comes from, according to Rev. iii. 19. 21. Men will not take pains to correct ſtubborn ſervants, but will turn them out of doors; but love conſtrains them to chaſtiſe their ſons. God, out of hatred, lets many a ſinner go unpuniſhed in this world; for, why ſhould he prune or dreſs the tree which he intends for the fire? The malefactor eſcapes ſcourging that is condemned to the gallows: Job xxi. 30. "The wicked is reſerved to the day of deſtruction, they ſhall be brought forth to the day of wrath." But it is far otherwiſe with the children of God. That is a ſtrange word which Job hath, Job vii. 17, 18. "What is man that thou ſhouldſt magnify him? And that thou ſhouldſt ſet thine heart upon him? And that thou ſhouldſt viſit him every morning, and try him every moment?" Now, if we compare this place with others in the context, we will ſee how he acknowledgeth that the moſt overwhelming diſtreſs proceeds from the love and care of God, yea, from his fixing his heart on him, to magnify him, and do him good; and that for this end he doth chaſten him every morning, and try him every moment; and that with ſuch afflictions as for the preſent are ſo far from being joyous, as that they give the ſoul no reſt, but even make the man weary of his life; as he expreſſeth what effects his affliction had on himſelf. Yea, it may be obſerved in the providence of God, from the foundation of the world, that thoſe who have had moſt afflictions, have had moſt grace, and the moſt eminent teſtimonies of acceptance with God: Jeſus Chriſt the Son of God, had the moſt afflictions of

any; and yet the Father always loved him, and was well pleaſed with him.

3*dly*, Conſider the bright examples of patience which God ſets before you in his word. Beſides that of his dear Son, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, of whom I ſpoke before: Conſider the patience of Job, when he was ſtript of all his earthly comforts, and laid under the greateſt afflictions, yet he calmly falls down and worſhips God, Job i. 21. and ſaid, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return: The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, bleſſed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job ſinned not, nor charged God fooliſhly." Conſider the patience of David, when he was driven from his throne, from his houſe, and from God's ſanctuary, and all this by his own ſon! yet, how ſubmiſſive is he to God? 2 Sam. xv. 26. "Behold here I am, let him do to me as ſeemeth good to him." And when Shimei curſed him, and threw ſtones at him, he patiently bore it, and would ſuffer no harm to be done him for it, ſaying, as in 2 Sam. xvi. 11. 'Let him alone, and let him curſe, for the Lord hath bidden him.' Conſider the patience of holy Eli, when, tho' he heard ſuch news as, like a ſudden clap of thunder made the ears of ſuch as heard it to tingle and their hearts to tremble, yet he calmly and quietly ſubmitted to it, 1 Sam. iii. 18. "It is the Lord, let him do what ſeemeth him good." He doth not fly in God's face in a paſſion, but falls down at his feet in a humble ſubmiſſion. Obſerve alſo the wonderful patience of Aaron when God afflicted him very ſore, he is ſilent and ſubmiſſive under the Lord's hand. Lev. x. 3. 'And Aaron held his peace.' If we conſider the greatneſs of the puniſhment, we will ſee the more cauſe to recommend the greatneſs of his patience: 1. Aaron loſt his children, not his eſtate or worldly ſubſtance, but his children; theſe are a part of a man's bowels; other earthly loſſes are not compar-

able to this; therefore it was that Satan, that cunning enemy, reserved the loss of Job's children to the last onset, as his great master-piece and sharpest attack. How sadly did Rachel lament and weep for her children! Mat. ii. 18. yet Aaron held his peace. 2. Aaron lost his two sons at once: how pathetically did David bewail the loss of one son! 2 Sam. xviii. 33. "O my son Absalom! my son, my son!" *&c.* yet Aaron lost both his sons together, and saith not one word, he held his peace. 3. Aaron lost them by a sudden death, of which he had no warning: Sickness usually prepares men for the stroke that is coming by death; but Aaron met with a surprising blow, yet he held his peace. 4. Aaron's sons were not taken away by an ordinary stroke of God's hand, but by an extraordinary supernatural rod; for it is said, "There went out fire from the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord," Lev. x. 2. He lost them in such a manner, as might speak forth God's anger; now, a religious father had rather lose all his children in the favour of God, than one child in his anger; yet, whatever were the bitter ingredients of this cup, Aaron was not impatient against God that mixed it for him, but held his peace, because God did it.

4*thly*, To engage you to patience under your trials, do but compare your case with that of others. Do not say, there is none afflicted as you are; for there are many far deeper plunged in the waters of Mara than you are; some are still upon the rack, and spend their whole days and years in continual fighting and struggling; as in Psal. xxxi. 10. "My life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing." Have you sore distress in your bodies? others have grievous wounds in their souls. Do you bear the wrath of man? others bear the wrath of God. You have but one single trial, others have many twisted together. Some are stript of all comforts, you have

comforts ſtill remaining. You have many ſad things in your trial, but you have not ground as yet to complain, as the Pſalmiſt doth, Pſal. xlii. 7. "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Take a view of what the Son of God, what the apoſtles, and what the martyrs and other worthies have endured. They had trial of cruel mockings, ſcourgings, bonds and impriſonments: they wandered in deſarts, in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth, being deſtitute, afflicted, tormented. They were tempted, they were crucified, ſtoned to death, ſawn aſunder, ſlain with the ſword, &c. And yet how well did they take with the croſs? ſaith Paul, "We glory in tribulation," Rom. v. 3. And what ſaith James? "James i. 2. "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into diverſe temptations." As if he had ſaid, Rejoice aye more and more that you are afflicted: God is magnifying you, he is viſiting you; doing you good, taking the more pains on you, and fitting you for glory.

5*thly*, The conſideration of God's former mercies and kindneſſes to you, ſhould engage you to patience in trouble, and make you bluſh to take any thing ill out of God's hand. Thus Job taught his impatient wife, Job ii. 10. "What! ſhall we receive good at the hand of God, and ſhall we not receive evil?" O believer, let not thy afflictions cauſe thee to bury thy mercies in oblivion. Has not God brought thee from Satan's family, and put you among his children; and, will you forget or undervalue that honour? Hath he ſtruck off thy fetters, taken off thy priſon-garments, and ſet you at liberty; and, will you be unthankful? Hath he given thee Chriſt for thy treaſure and portion, and entitled you to his unſearchable riches; and will you be diſcontented? Hath he given you the graces of his Spirit, which are more precious than rubies; and will you quarrel when he ſmites in ſome outward things? Hath he

made you an heir of glory, and provided eternal manſions above for you; and, will you be fretful for want of ſome trifles here? The views Moſes had of the recompence of reward in heaven, cauſed him chuſe to ſuffer affliction patiently with the people of God.

6thly, The time of affliction is uſually God's gracious tryſting ſeaſon with his people, the time of their rareſt comforts and ſweeteſt fortaſtes of heaven, according to 2 Cor. i. 5. Paul and Silas did never ſing more joyfully than when they were laid in the inner priſon, with their backs torn with ſcourges, and their feet faſt in the ſtocks, Acts xvi. 24. And when was it that Jacob ſaw the angels of God aſcending and deſcending upon the ladder that reached betwixt heaven and earth, but at the time when he was in a deſtitute caſe, forced to lye in the open field, having no canopy but the heavens; and no pillow but a ſtone? When was it that the three children ſaw Chriſt in the likeneſs of the Son of man walking with them, but when they were in the furnace, and that when it was hotter than ordinary? When was it that Ezekiel had a viſion of God, but when ſitting ſolitary by the river Chebar, in the land of his captivity? When was it that John got a glorious viſion of Chriſt, but when he was an exile in the iſle of Patmos? And when was it that Stephen ſaw the heavens opened, and Chriſt ſtanding at the right hand of God, pleading for him; but when they were ſtoning and bruiſing him to death? So that the moſt remarkable experiences of God's kindneſs, that believers get in this world, have been tryſted to the time of affliction: the conſideration whereof ſhould move every Chriſtian to wait on the Lord, and bear his croſs with patience.

7thly, When you are helped to Chriſtian patience and ſubmiſſion under God's hand, it doth contribute much to the credit of religion, and to the conviction

of the world, that there is a certain reality in the truths of the goſpel, and a great efficacy in the grace of God, which bears you up, and carries you through beyond the ſtrength of nature.

Laſtly, O believer, bear up with patience under the croſs, for thou haſt not long to bear it. God's wrath on the church abideth but for a moment, yea, a little moment, Iſa. xxvi. 20. "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers and ſhut thy doors about thee; hide thyſelf as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpaſt." Surely a moment, a little moment, which is the ſmalleſt part of time, will ſoon be over: and wilt thou not have patience for a moment? The Pſalmiſt ſupported himſelf with this conſideration, Pſalm ciii. 9. "He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger for ever." The time of indignation will ſoon be overpaſt, and the time of conſolation will ſucceed. O believer, the end of all thy trials is near; think on it, and look for it. Is it bodily pain or ſickneſs that is thy affliction? then, conſider the end of it will be either life or death; if death, then what thou ſuffereſt is the laſt brunt, bear it patiently. Theſe enemies you now ſee, you will ſee them again no more. In the manſions above, there is no pain nor crying: the inhabitants there ſhall never ſay they are ſick; and one hour with them will make thee forget all thy momentary afflictions. If the iſſue ſhall be life, you will be aſhamed, when well, that you had no more patience whilſt ſick.

I ſhall cloſe this direction with the words of the apoſtle, James v. 10, 11. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience. Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have ſeen the end of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy."

DIRECT. III. *Let believers be much employed in the praiſes of God, while they are under affliction by ſickneſs or otherwiſe.*

AS we ſhould bleſs the Lord at all times, and keep up good thoughts of God on every occaſion; ſo eſpecially in the time of affliction. Hence we are commanded to glorify the Lord in the fires, Iſa. xxiv. 15. And this the three children did in the hotteſt furnace. So Job bleſſed God, when he had taken away his greateſt comforts, Job i. 21. And this is agreeable to that command, 1 Theſ. v. 18. "In every thing give thanks." I grant, indeed, we cannot give thanks for affliction as affliction, but either as it is the means of ſome good to us, or as the gracious hand of God is ſome way remarkable therein towards us. In this reſpect, there is no condition on this ſide of hell, but we have cauſe to praiſe God in, even in the greateſt calamities. Hence it was that David, when he ſpeaks of his affliction, Pſal. cxix. 67. adds preſently, "Thou art good, and doſt good." And he declares, ver. 65. 'Thou haſt dealt well with thy ſervant, O Lord, according unto thy word." Hence Paul and Silas praiſed God when they were ſcourged and impriſoned.

Well, then, O believer, obey the command of thy God, and imitate his worthies, by praiſing God under thy affliction. 1. This practice would be very pleaſant and acceptable to God; for as muſic is ſweeteſt on the waters, ſo praiſe is moſt agreeable to God from an afflicted ſoul on the waters of trouble. It is a ſign of a noble and generous ſpirit, to ſing the praiſes of God's goodneſs while his hand is afflicting us. Diſtreſs and danger will make the wickedeſt to pray; but it is a principle of love and gratitude that makes the ſoul to praiſe. 2. It would bring credit to religion, to ſee ſaints thankful and praiſing God under the croſs; it would make people

ſay, Surely they find ſweetneſs in God and his ways that we ſee not! they have meat to eat, the world knows not of. And this would invite ſtrangers to come and try a religious life. The joyful praiſes of the martyrs at the ſtakes, and in the flames, made people go home with love to religion in their hearts. 3. If the iſſue of your affliction ſhould be death, this employment of praiſe would be a ſweet preparative to fit and diſpoſe you for the work of heaven. Uſe yourſelves much to this heavenly life, and be often trying to ſing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb in time of ſickneſs and trouble; and this would ſweeten the thoughts of death, and make you incline to be there, where praiſe is their conſtant work.

Queſt. What ſhould be the ſubject of a believer's thankſgiving and praiſe under affliction?

Anſw. He hath manifold grounds of praiſe; as, *1ſt*, Upon the account of God's mercies to him through the by-paſt part of his life. His mercies to thee, O believer, cannot be numbered: compare thy mercies with thy croſſes, and thou wilt ſoon ſee thy receivings are far greater than thy ſufferings. Thou haſt had many days of plenty for one day of ſcarcity, many days of liberty for one day of ſtraits, many days of health for one day of ſickneſs. And are not theſe to be remembered with praiſe?

2dly, And more particularly, in thy greateſt affliction, thou haſt ground to praiſe God, O believer, that thou waſt born in a land of light, where thou hadſt the means of converſion to God, and acquaintance with Jeſus Chriſt; and eſpecially that God of his free grace made theſe means effectual to work a ſaving change in you, when others were paſt by. Is not this matter of praiſe, that he opened your eyes, humbled your ſoul, and renewed your heart? That he gave you Chriſt, forgave your ſins, and adopted you into his family, and made you an heir of heaven? Oh, what a ſad caſe would it be, if you

were yet in your ſins, and in the bondage of Satan; if you had converſion-work to begin to, if you had your faith and juſtification and intereſt in Chriſt all to ſeek, and all your preparations for heaven to make; if you had all this to do with a ſick and pained body, and a diſordered mind, that cannot command one ſettled thought, with the terrible views of death and eternity before your eyes. This is the caſe that God in juſtice might have left you to. Well, then, ought you not to praiſe God, that ſent his holy Spirit in time to determine your heart to cloſe with Chriſt, and be reconciled to that God you are ſhortly to appear before; and that theſe ſins, which now would have been your terror, are all forgiven and waſhen away thro' the blood of Jeſus Chriſt?

3*dly*, Is it not matter of praiſe in thy greateſt trouble, that thou haſt a great High-prieſt, that is paſſed into the heavens, to provide a manſion with the Father for thee, and to receive thy ſoul when ſeparated from the body, "that, where he is, there you may be alſo?"

4*thly*, You have cauſe to bleſs God, that he ſends ſuch ſuitable harbingers, as ſickneſs and trouble, to tell you that death is approaching; and that he ſhould take ſuch pains on you, to wean you from the world, and make you willing to be gone. Many of God's people, that have been averſe to dying at the beginning of a ſickneſs, by the increaſe and continuance of it, have been brought to be well ſatiſfied to depart, that they might be with Chriſt.

5*thly*, You have ground to bleſs God for timing your afflictions ſo well, that he ſent them not till he ſaw you ſtood in need of them; he ſaw a need-be for them, as 1 Pet. i. 6. and he would not let you want what was needful.

6*thly*, You ought to praiſe God, that he mitigates your trials, and proportions your burdens

for your back, that when he takes a rod to you, he hath not made it a ſcorpion; that when he deprived you of one comfort and enjoyment, he did not ſtrip you of all, and leave you wholly comfortleſs: that when you ſuffer in one thing, he hath not made you to ſuffer in every thing, in ſoul, body, eſtate, relations, and all together; that inſtead of afflicting you for a few days, he hath not made your whole life a ſcene of miſery and affliction. Bleſs God, that he puniſheth you leſs, unſpeakably leſs, than your iniquities deſerve; that your ſick-bed is not hell, your fever is not everlaſting burnings, your pain is not the gnawing of the worm that never dieth.

7*thly*, You have cauſe to praiſe God, that your affliction is not ſo great as that of ſome others, and even of ſome that were very dear to God, and had not grieved him ſo much as you have done. Remember the trials that ſome have endured, of whom the world was not worthy, which I mentioned before, as recorded Heb. xi. Yours are nothing to theirs, nothing to Job's, that eminent ſervant of God. Obſerve the difference with thankſgiving and praiſe.

8*thly*, You have reaſon to bleſs God for the ſtrength and ſupport he hath given you under affliction. You would ſoon ſink and ſuccumb under a ſmall burden, if he did not ſupport you by his grace; but when he bears you up, the heavieſt trial ſhall not ſink you. Have not you met with ſome afflictions, you have thought, at a diſtance, you would never be able to bear up under them; yet, when they have come, you have found them light and portable, by reaſon of the ſtrength God hath beſtowed upon you.

9*thly*, You have ground of thankſgiving, that the mercies and bleſſings which God hath continued with you, are far greater than theſe he hath

taken from you: For though he hath taken this and that temporal bleſſing from you, yet he hath not taken Chriſt from you, nor his holy Spirit from you; he hath not ſeparated you from his love, nor cut you off from all hopes of heaven. However great your trials be, yet ſtill there is a mixture of mercy in your lot, which ſhould be matter of praiſe.

Laſtly, You have cauſe, O believer, to bleſs God, that all the afflictions he brings on you are in love, and for your profit. All his ways are mercy and truth to you. If he ſmile, it is in mercy; and, if he ſmite, it is in mercy. God may change his diſpenſation towards his children, but never his diſpoſition: his heart is ſtill towards them, and the cords wherewith he ſcourgeth them, are cords of love. Their profit is the great thing he aims at, in all their chaſtiſements, Heb. xii. 10. He deſigns thereby to reclaim them from their wanderings, cut off proviſions for their luſts, make them pant and long for a better ſtate, and cauſe them mend their pace toward it. Hence David ſaith, "It is good for me that I was afflicted: For, before I was afflicted, I went aſtray, but now I have learned to keep thy word," Pſalm cxix. 67. 71. From all which, it appears, you have manifold grounds of praiſe, even in the time of affliction.

DIRECT. IV. *Let the children of God, when viſited with ſickneſs, ſet about actual preparation for death and eternity.*

EVERY believer hath his main work done, and is always in a gracious ſtate, by reaſon of his union with Jeſus Chriſt, his reconciliation with God, through the merit of his blood, and the univerſal change that is wrought in him by regenerating and ſanctifying grace: upon which account, every child of God hath habitual preparation for

meeting with death. Yet, becauſe, frequently, when ſickneſs cometh, there are many things out of order with them, that make death frightful and undeſirable, they muſt ſet about actual preparation for death, and ſeek to have their ſouls made ready for the Bridegroom's coming. And here I ſhall ſhew wherein this actual readineſs of believers doth conſiſt, which ſhould be their proper work and exerciſe in time of ſickneſs, eſpecially when ſickneſs is lingering, and doth not deſtroy the uſe of reaſon. But beware of thinking that this ſhould be delayed till ſickneſs come: No, no; the time of health is the main working ſeaſon, and all ſhould be then put by-hand as far as poſſible. But, ſeeing even the beſt generally find much to do at the very laſt, I ſhall give the following advices for your actual preparation.

1*ſt*, Seeing ſickneſs is a mean appointed of God for his people's good, and particularly for fitting them for a better world; labour earneſtly to reap the benefit of ſickneſs, ſeek God's bleſſing upon it, that thereby you may be helped to diſcover more of the evil of ſin, that you may hate and abhor it the more, and that you may ſee more effectually the vanity and vexation of the world, and get your heart looſed from all the things of time, and brought to a willingneſs to be diſſolved, that you may be with Chriſt.

2*dly*, Seeing a time of death and ſickneſs is the time of your greateſt need, beg earneſtly of God, for your Redeemer's ſake, ſuch ſpecial aſſiſtances, influences and operations of his holy Spirit, as he knows needful for you in your preſent low and weak condition, in order to carry on and complete your actual readineſs for meeting with himſelf at death, and entering into the inviſible world, and being fixed unalterably in your everlaſting ſtate.

3*dly*, Renew the exerciſe of repentance, and

of faith in the blood of Chriſt, for removing all grounds of quarrel and controverſy betwixt God and your ſoul. And in order thereto, review your by-paſt life and look into your heart alſo, and ſearch out every predominant ſin and idol of jealouſy; for if there be any iniquity regarded in your heart, and unrepented of by you, it may occaſion no little anguiſh and bitterneſs of ſpirit in a dying hour. Well, when thou haſt diſcovered ſin, humbly confeſs and bewail it before the Lord, and aſk forgiveneſs for it, thro' the blood of Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of God, which cleanſeth from all ſin. Yea, make confeſſion of all thy ſins, and particularly reflect upon the fountain and ſpring of them, viz. thy original ſin. Know the plague of thy own heart, and mourn over it; mourn for the loſs and miſpending of much precious time. Mourn for the unprofitableneſs of thy life. Now, when the ax is laid to the root of the tree by ſickneſs, it is high time to mourn for your unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace and waterings of the holy Spirit. Mourn for your ſinning againſt ſuch light and love as have been many days diſplayed to you in the glorious goſpel. And, in a ſpecial manner, mourn for your ſins of omiſſion, which commonly are but little minded by us. Thus mourn for all thy ſins till thou doſt water thy couch with tears. It is moſt ſuitable that death ſhould find every man, even every child of God, in the exerciſe of mourning and repentance; for they that thus ſow in tears, ſhall eternally reap in joy. But ſee that your tears run much in the goſpel-channel, and flow from the believing views of a crucified Chriſt, whom you have pierced by your ſins. And, in the midſt of your mourning, be ſtill aiming to take faith's grips of the clefts of the rock, for ſheltering thy ſoul from the guilt of by-paſt ſins; ſay, "Lord Jeſus, I have no refuge but thy wounds, no fountain but thy blood, no covert but thy

righteouſneſs. And ſeeing thou freely makeſt offer of thy merits for my protection, and inviteſt even the chief of ſinners to come unto thee, ſaying, 'Look unto me, and be ye ſaved!' Lord, I embrace the offer, and flee to thee to cover me. O, believer, do this, not once or twice, but do it an hundred times over; do it as long as thou haſt a breath to draw in the world. Be ſtill breathing, to the very laſt, after a crucified Jeſus, for relief againſt the guilt of ſin, which thou art always contracting, and will be, till the earthly houſe of this tabernacle be diſſolved.

4*thly*, In order to your actual readineſs to go forth to meet the Bridegroom, when coming to you by death, you muſt do as the wiſe virgins, Matth. xxv. 7. "Ariſe and trim your lamps." As it is not enough to have a fair lamp of profeſſion, ſo it is not ſufficient to have only the oil of grace in the lamp, nay, or to have it burning in ſome degree. There is more requiſite at this time, that the ſoul may be actually ready; the lamp muſt be trimmed, which imports, 1*ſt*, A ſupplying it with more oil; you muſt ſeek to have your grace increaſed; to have new ſtrength, and new ſupplies of grace given you from God, to fit you for the laſt conflict with your ſpiritual enemies, and eſpecially the laſt enemy, death. 2*dly*, It imports a ſtirring up of the oil, and raiſing the wick ſome higher: So there muſt be an excitation of grace, which may be in a low declining condition; you muſt endeavour to ſtir and raiſe it up to a more lively exerciſe, and more elevated acts. Stir up the gift that is in thee: make the oil burn clear and ſhine bright. Bring faith, love, repentance and holy deſires to a lively exerciſe. 3*dly*, This trimming imports the cleanſing of the lamp, by taking away the dead aſhes that hinder light, or prevent its burning ſo clearly as otherwiſe it would. So you muſt labour to take away the dead aſhes of corruption, that hinder the ſhining of grace;

remove all unbelief, earthlineſs, deadneſs, ſelf and formality, and whatever doth ſuppreſs the exerciſe of faith, love, and heavenly-mindedneſs. Let all theſe dead aſhes be ſnuffed away by repentance and mortification. As you ought to ſtrive earneſtly againſt all theſe heart-evils in time of health, ſo now labour to give them a dead-ſtroke when death's harbinger gives you a ſummons.

5*thly*, Be diligent in gathering and ſumming up all your evidences for heaven and eternal life, that ſo you may not venture into the dark valley at an uncertainty. The comfort of dying will much depend on the clearneſs of your evidences; it is therefore your wiſdom to examine them carefully, and ſee if you can ſay, "I know in whom I have believed; I have conſented with my ſoul to the method of ſalvation laid down in the covenant of grace, I am deſirous that the glory of it ſhould be eternally aſcribed to the free grace of God, and the creature be wholly abaſed in his ſight. I have choſen God for my portion, and Chriſt for my only Saviour; and the happineſs which I aim at, is to enjoy God and Chriſt for ever. And, in order thereto, I depend on the Holy Spirit to apply the redemption which Jeſus Chriſt hath purchaſed to me, and to ſanctify me perfectly. There is no ſin but what I hate and deſire to part with. I would rather have more holineſs than to have health, wealth, and all the pleaſures in the world. I earneſtly deſire the flouriſhing of Chriſt's kingdom; and prefer Jeruſalem to my chiefeſt joy." If theſe your evidences be clear, you may cheerfully take death by the cold hand, and welcome its grim meſſengers, and long to be gone, that you may be with Chriſt. You may ſay as Pſal. xxiii. 4. "When I walk through the valley of the ſhadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." You may go off the ſtage with the Pſalmiſt's words in your mouth, Pſal. xxxi. 5.

"Into thine hand I commit my ſpirit; for thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth."

6thly, Labour earneſtly to overcome the love of life and fears of death, ſo as to be content to part with all things here at God's call. O believer, what is there in this earth to tempt thee to hang back, when God calls thee to depart? While you are here, you may lay your account with many loſſes, croſſes, diſappointments, griefs, and calamities of all ſorts. Friends will fail you, enemies will hate you, luſts will moleſt you, Satan will tempt you, and the world will deceive you. Death is the way that the deareſt of God's ſaints, and all the cloud of witneſſes, have gone before you; yea, the Lord Jeſus, your head, hath trod this path, and hath taken the ſting out of death, and hath paved a way through its dark valley, that his people may ſafely follow him. Hath the Captain of your ſalvation gone before you, and will any of his ſoldiers ſhrink to follow him? Art thou content to remain always at the ſame diſtance from him, and to enjoy no more of his preſence than now you have? Are you ſatisfied to live for ever with no more knowledge of God, no more love to Chriſt, no more holineſs or heavenly-mindedneſs than at preſent you have? Do you not groan under your remaining ignorance, deadneſs, wanderings, pride, paſſion, unbelief, ſelfiſhneſs, worldlineſs, and other ſins and luſts that here beſet you? And are you not deſirous to go to the place where you will be eternally free of them all, and where you will never complain of a dull, dead, or ſenſeleſs frame of heart, or of any heart-wearineſs, nor wandering in duty any more? For the heart ſhall then be as a fixed pillar in the temple of God, and ſhall go no more out; the eternal adoration and praiſes of God ſhall be the ſoul's delight and element for ever. By ſuch conſiderations ſtrive to conquer the fears of death, and deſires of life, which are often great clogs to

the people of God in their preparations for flitting.

7thly, Be oft meditating upon the heavenly glory which ſhortly all believers will ſee and enjoy. Be much in the contemplation of the glorious company above, behold Chriſt upon his glorious throne at the right hand of God, and Abraham, David, Peter, Paul, and all the reſt of the faithful ones, with their crowns of righteouſneſs, triumphing about their Redeemer. Think, O believer, how happy will that day be, when thou ſhalt meet with thy father and thy brethren, and when thou ſhalt ſee thy elder Brother on the throne ready to paſs ſentence in thy favours. What melody will that ſentence ſound in thy ears, "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father," &c. What frame wilt thou be in, when he ſets the crown of glory on thy head? O eternal free love! wilt thou cry. "O Saviour, thou didſt wear a crown of thorns, that I might wear a crown of glory; thou didſt groan on the croſs, that I might now ſing. Wonderful free love that choſed me, when thouſands were paſſed by; that ſaved me from ruin, when my companions in ſin muſt burn in hell for ever. Think, how raviſhing it will be to meet with your godly acquaintances in heaven, with whom you prayed, ans praiſed, and converſed here! Will you not then cry out, "O, my brethren, what a change is here! This glorious place is not like the poor dwellings we had on earth; this body, this ſoul, this ſtate, this place, our clothes, our company, our language, our thoughts, are far unlike thoſe we had then! The bad hearts, the body of death, the corruptions and temptations we then complained of, are all now gone. We have no more fears of death or hell, no more uſe for repentance or prayer, faith or hope; theſe are now ſwallowed up in immediate viſion, eternal love and praiſe." And for thy help, O believer, in meditating on theſe

things, read ſome parts of the book of Revelation, or cauſe them to be read to you; and ſuppoſe with yourſelf, you had been a companion with John in the Iſle of Patmos, and had got ſuch a view of the glorious Majeſty, the bright thrones, the heavenly hoſts, and ſhining ſplendor which he ſaw; the ſaints in their white robes, with crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, and heard them ſinging the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb, and trumpeting forth their eternal hallelujahs: what a heavenly rapture wouldſt thou have been in! Well then, O believer, thou ſhalt ſhortly have clearer and ſweeter ſights than all theſe which John, or any of the ſaints, ever ſaw here upon earth. Surely that heavenly glory is a ſubject worthy of thy thoughts, and moſt ſuitable for thee to meditate on in the time of ſickneſs, and when in the view of death.

8*thly*, It would be alſo very ſuitable at this time in order to your actual readineſs for death, to be frequently looking out and longing for Chriſt's coming; as Abraham ſtood in his tent-door ready to go forth to meet the angels that were ſent unto him, ſo ſhould the believer keep himſelf in a waiting poſture at this time. He ſhould be like the loving wife, that longs and looks for the coming of her abſent huſband, according to his letters to her; by this time (thinks ſhe) he will be at ſuch a place, and ſo in a few days I will ſee him. It is the character of believers, they are ſuch as love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 8. They deſire his coming, Cant. viii. 14. "Make haſte, my beloved. Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus, come quickly." Believers ſhould look upon themſelves as pilgrims here, wandering in a wilderneſs abſent from home, and at a diſtance from their Father's houſe; and in time of affliction it is very proper for them to be crying, as David doth, Pſal. lv. 6. "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at reſt: I would

haſten my eſcape from the windy tempeſt. O when ſhall the time of my pilgrimage and the days of my baniſhment be finiſhed, that I may get home to my country and friends above? Oh! my Lord is gone, my Saviour hath left the earth, and entered into his glory; my friends and brethren are gone to their bleſſed reſt, where they ſee God's face, and ſing his praiſe for ever: and, how can I be willing to ſtay behind, when they are gone? Muſt I be ſinning here, when they are ſerving God above? Muſt I be groaning and ſighing, when they are triumphing and dividing the ſpoil? Surely I will look after them, and cry, O Lord, how long? When ſhall I be with my Saviour and my God?"

DIRECT. V. *Let Believers in time of ſickneſs endeavour all they can to glorify God and edify thoſe that are about them, by their ſpeech and behaviour.*

IF ever a child of God be active to promote the honour and glory of God, it ſhould be in time of ſickneſs, and when death may be approaching; and there is good reaſon for it: for, 1*ſt*, This may be the laſt opportunity that ever thou ſhalt have to do any thing for God, and therefore thou ſhouldſt ſtudy to improve it to the utmoſt. Heaven, to which thou art going, is the place where thou ſhalt receive thy reward; but thou canſt have no acceſs there to advance God's glory, by commending God and Chriſt and religion to ſinners or weak believers. Upon this account, many of God's children have been content to ſuſpend their heavenly happineſs for a while, and to ſtay upon the earth for longer time. I have read of a certain martyr, when going to ſuffer, who expreſſed ſome ſorrow, that he was going thither, where he ſhould do his God no more ſervice, to wit, in the ſenſe above explained. And of another, that ſaith, if it were poſſible

there could be place for any grief in heaven, it would ariſe from the Chriſtian's conſidering, that he did ſo little for God while he was upon the earth. Now is the working ſeaſon; O believer, be buſy while it laſts, according to the example of thy bleſſed Saviour, John ix. 4. "I muſt work the work of him that ſent me while it is day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work." This conſideration ſhould make thee beſtir thyſelf with the greateſt activity, like Samſon before his death, who when he could have no more opportunity to ſerve God and his church, he cried to God and ſaid, Judges xvi. 28. "O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee, and ſtrengthen me this once." And then he bowed himſelf with all his might, to pull down the pillars of Dagon's temple, being willing to ſacrifice his life to the ruins thereof.

2*dly*, The holy ſpeech and carriage of dying believers may, through the bleſſing of God, make deep impreſſions on the hearts of unregenerate men that are witneſſes to them. Theſe who have derided the people of God for the ſtrictneſs of their lives, and deſpiſed their counſel and reproofs, as proceeding from humour or preciſeneſs; yet have begun to notice their words and actions, when they have ſeen them on ſick-beds, and on the borders of eternity, and to have other thoughts of religion and holineſs than formerly they had. Now they think the man is in good earneſt, and ſpeaketh the thoughts of his heart; and, if ever he can be believed, it muſt be now. It is moſt convincing to carnal perſons, to ſee believers bearing up with patience under their ſickneſs: to hear them ſpeaking good of God, commending his ways, and rejoicing in God as their portion, in midſt of their ſharpeſt pains; to ſee them behaving as thoſe that are going to dwell with Chriſt, ſmiling and praiſing God, when friends are ſighing and weeping

about them. This inclines them to think, ſurely there muſt be a reality in religion; there is a viſible difference betwixt the death of the righteous and of the wicked. Hence a wicked Balaam wiſhed to die the death of the righteous, and to have his laſtend like his. It left a conviction upon that young man's conſcience, who ſaid to his looſe companion, after they had viſited godly Ambroſe on his death-bed, and ſaw how chearful he was, and triumphing over approaching death, O that I might live with thee, and die with Ambroſe! Nay, ſuch ſights might draw not only to deſire to die the death of the righteous, but alſo to reſolve to live their lives. If carnal men ſaw believers going off the ſtage with ſuch confidence and joy, as becomes theſe that are entering into eternal reſt with Chriſt, and theſe that are going out of a howling wilderneſs to a glorious Canaan; it might be a powerful invitation to them to go and ſeek after the ſame felicity.

3*dly*, This, likewiſe, would be very edifying and confirming to all that fear God. How much would it contribute to eſtabliſh them in the practice of holineſs, and to quicken them in their diligence in ſerving and glorifying of God in the days of their health, to hear a dying believer ſay, "Of all the time which I have lived, I have no comfort now in reflecting upon one hour, but what I ſpent in the ſervice of God. Were I to begin my life, I would redeem time more carefully than ever. One hour in communion with God, is far ſweeter than many years ſpent in worldly pleaſures. Come here then, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my ſoul! O taſte and ſee that God is good!"

4*thly*, Conſider the examples of God's children in former ages, how uſeful and edifying their words have been, at ſuch a time, to all about them. But this head I intend to inſiſt fully upon afterwards.

Queſt. But, how ſhall I behave ſo as I may glorify

God and edify others, when I am ſick or dying? I would have ſome particular directions for it.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, You may do this by your patience under pain, and ſubmiſſion to God's will, with reſpect to the event, whether life or death. It is ſtumbling to others, to ſee believers fretful in trouble, and unwilling to leave the world when God calls them. But it is moſt convincing and confirming to ſee them frankly reſigning themſelves to God's diſpoſal, ſaying, Let God himſelf chooſe for me; he is wiſe, and knoweth beſt what is needful and moſt proper for me; I have no will, but God's will. For any man to deſire to live when God calls him to die, or to deſire to die when God calls him to live, is equally a ſign of cowardice: For he that deſires to live, is afraid to look death in the face; and he that deſires to die, would flee from ſome calamity, and take ſhelter in death. But he is the moſt valiant man, that can die willingly when God would have him die, and live as willingly when God would have him live: this is true Chriſtian valour.

2*dly*, By pious exhortations and warnings to theſe that are about you. It may be the laſt occaſion you may have have of glorifying God this way; O do not loſe the ſeaſon which may be uſefully improven for the good of ſouls. For thus a believer may bring more honour to God, and more advantage to precious ſouls by his ſickneſs and death, than ever he did by all his health and life in the world; for their ſpeeches have more weight with people at ſuch a time, than at any other. Hence the Patriarchs knowing the prevalency of ſuch words, do urge Joſeph with Jacob's dying charge, Gen. l. 16, 17. "And they ſent a meſſenger unto Joſeph, ſaying, Thy father did command before he died, ſaying, So ſhall ye ſay unto Joſeph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the treſpaſs of thy brethren," &c. And as we ought to be ready to give good counſels to all when we lie

on ſick-beds, ſo eſpecially we ſhould be concerned for children and near relations: they are more affected than others with our ſickneſs, and ſo will they be with our ſayings; our admonitions may do them good, when we are rotting in the duſt.

Queſt. What ought to be the ſubject of our diſcourſes and exhortations to others at ſuch a time?

Anſ. 1*ſt*, It is very proper to be much in commending the Maſter you have ſerved, and the excellency of his ſervice, to theſe that are about you. Tell them of the equity and goodneſs of theſe laws which you have obeyed, and of the bounty and faithfulneſs of that Lord whom you have worſhipped, loved and praiſed; and of the greatneſs and eternity of that reward you are going to poſſeſs. Let the children of God extol their father, and his care of them and kindneſs to them. Let the ranſomed of the Lord magnify their Redeemer, and his wonderful love and ſufferings for them. Tell others what ſweetneſs and ſatisfaction you have found in your own experience in attending God's ordinances, and in ſecret duties; what comfort you have found in Chriſt and the promiſes of his covenant. And thus let your laſt breath be ſpent in exalting and commending Chriſt and religion to others.

2*dly*, Be warning others of the vanity of the world, and of all its wealth and pleaſures. Tell them that they may ſee by your caſe, that theſe things which people are bewitched with in the days of their health, can ſignify nothing to a ſick or dying man; they cannot eaſe us of our pains, they can afford no peace to a troubled ſoul, they cannot lengthen our lives one hour, and far leſs can they ſave from the wrath of an angry God. "Oh, may you ſay, what a miſerable caſe had I been in at this time, if I had had no better portion than this world, and nothing elſe to look to but its riches and pleaſures?" Wherefore, ſirs, ſet not your hearts

upon it, but forſake it before you be forſaken by it, and make choice of that which will be ſupporting to you in the evil day.

3*dly*, Be warning them of the evil of ſin, and what miſchief and deceitfulneſs you have found in it. Tell them, that though the devil and the fleſh would tempt you to look on ſin as a harmleſs thing, yet the pleaſure will ſoon be gone, and a ſharp ſting will be left behind. Sin will appear no light matter, when the ſoul is going hence into the awful preſence of a holy God. You would give a thouſand worlds then for Chriſt, and the blood of atonement to anſwer for your ſins.

4*thly*, Tell them of the great difference betwixt the godly and the wicked man's choice. The godly man chuſeth the better part that cannot be taken from him; he lays up his treaſure in heaven, where none can reach it, ſo that it yields him rich ſupplies when ſickneſs and death come upon him. But, O how fooliſh is the wicked man's choice, that for a moment's fleſhly pleaſure, doth loſe his immortal ſoul and everlaſting happineſs? Warn them to mind the one thing needful in time, and not to pamper their bodies for the worms, but to ſet themſelves preſently to cloſe in with the offers of Chriſt, and make ſure an intereſt in his righteouſneſs to cover them in the evil day.

5*thly*, Be telling them of the evil of ſloth and negligence in the work of their ſalvation; and be exhorting them to mind it, and to do it with all their might. For however ſome may cenſure and deride God's people now for their ſtrictneſs, diligence and zeal in the matters of religion; yet, when they come to die, they will be ready to wiſh that they had been more diligent in ſalvation-work, that they had loved God, fled to Chriſt, and had ſought and ſerved him with all their hearts and ſouls; and to cry, O for a little more time! O if God

would recover and try us once more with health, how diligent would we be! And tell them, that thoſe who have been moſt ſerious and painful in ſalvation-work, yet, when they came to die, did much lament their ſloth and negligence: yea, theſe that have been moſt reproached by the world for their diligence and fervency, did often wiſh at that time, O that we had been a thouſand times more diligent and laborious in God's ſervice!

6thly, Labour to perſuade othere of the preciouſneſs of time, the wiſdom of improving the time of youth, and of health; and the great folly of delaying repentance and putting it off to a ſick-bed. Say to them, "I find now by experience, that a time of ſickneſs is a moſt unfit ſeaſon to do any thing to purpoſe for the ſoul; my mind is ſo diverted and indiſpoſed for ſpiritual work, by ſickneſs and pain, that I cannot attain to any ſuitable compoſure for it. And how miſerable were I, if I had all my work to begin at this time! O take warning, and improve precious time, and eſpecially the day of the goſpel, the time of the Spirit's ſtrivings, and the time of youth, which is the moſt uſual ſeaſon for the converſion of ſouls, and of bringing ſinners into acquaintance with Jeſus Chriſt."

DIRECT. VI. *Let God's Children, when ſick or dying, be expreſſing a great concern for the advancement of the kingdom of* CHRIST, *and of true religion in the riſing generation.*

ZEAL and public-ſpiritedneſs for Chriſt's intereſt are very becoming his people in all the periods of their life, but more eſpecially at this time. When Chriſt is ready to take you into his kingdom in heaven, O be not unmindful of his kingdom on earth. It would be acceptable to God, and pleaſant in the ſight of men, to ſee you

expreſſing a warm concern for the riſing age, and for promoting the welfare of the ſouls of your children, and others, that ſurvive you: and ſeeing you can be no longer uſeful to theſe who live behind, by your counſels, examples, or prayers, as formerly, do your utmoſt for them now. And this concern the children of God, in time of ſickneſs, may evidence ſeveral ways.

1*ſt*, By earneſt prayers to God, both for the proſperity of his church, and the flouriſhing of religion in general; and alſo for your children and relations in particular, that they may be a holy ſeed, and a generation to ſerve God, and ſhew forth his praiſe in the world, when you are gone off the ſtage.

2*dly*, By intruſting the care of your children's education to ſuch tutors and guardians as will be much concerned for their ſouls, and will ſet before them godly examples and inſtructions in their young and tender years.

3*dly*, Be filling your latter-wills and teſtaments with many pious advices, and ſolemn charges to your children and relations, with reſpect to their ſerving God and worſhipping him in their families, and in ſecret; ſo as they can never look into your teſtaments, and the legacies left to them, but they will hear ſomething that may be affecting, upſtirring, and edifying to their ſouls.

4*thly*, By honouring the Lord with your ſubſtance, and leaving ſomething of what God hath bleſt you with, to pious uſes; particularly for the religious education of the children of the poor, for buying Bibles to them, and other good books, and for the propagating of Chriſtian knowledge in ignorant places, ſuch as the Highlands and Iſlands, by erecting and maintaining of ſchools therein: which glorious work is happily begun, and pretty far advanced by that honourable ſociety at Edinburgh, whoſe treaſurer is ready to receive donations from

all ſuch as the Lord pleaſeth to move to make a free-will offering for promoting that pious deſign. Many pious perſons have contributed already thereto; and it were deſirable that others, whom God hath enabled for it, ſhould mind it before they die: for by fatal experience we may obſerve, that the moſt godly parents do not know how their children will employ the eſtate they leave them, whether as fuel for their luſts, or as oil to feed the lamps in God's ſanctuary. It is proper for themſelves then, before they go off the ſtage, to diſpoſe of ſome part of their ſubſtance for the glory and ſervice of that God, who gave it all unto them.

5*thly*, It might contribute to promote piety, and to make the deeper impreſſions upon the minds of your children and friends, if under the warnings of death, you ſhould imitate the example of the prophet Elijah, who, in his lifetime, made a writing which he deſired to be delivered to king Jehoram after his death, 2 Chron. xx. 12. So, in like manner, you might write letters, and leave them in the hands of your friends and executors, full of advices, charges, admonitions, conſolations or threatnings, to be delivered to your children or friends, upon occaſion either of their good or bad converſation after your death: which probably would be more regared by them, than the counſels you gave them in the time of your life; for in ſome reſpect they would be received and read by them, as if they were letters from heaven.

DIRECT. VII. *Let the children of God labour to fortify themſelves what they can againſt all Satan's temptations and aſſaults, which they may expect to meet with in time of ſickneſs and affliction.*

A Time of affliction is commonly a time of temptation: for the old ſerpent knows the fitteſt

ſeaſons for aſſaulting the children of God; and he will not be wanting to improve this opportunity of advantage for ſetting upon the poor ſoul. When Pharaoh heard that the people were entangled in wilderneſs, he purſued them; ſo, when Satan ſees a ſoul entangled with diſtreſſes and troubles, he thinks it high time to make an attack. He ſeeks to winnow and ſift away the believer's grace, and therefore he comes when the corn is a-threſhing by the rod. When Job was ſmitten in his eſtate, health, and all other comforts, then this coward falls upon him, and tempts him to impatience, murmurings, and wrong thoughts of God.

At this time, O believer, you have ſpecial need to be on your guard, and look out; reckon always, when ſickneſs or trouble cometh, the prince of this world cometh alſo. Stand then to your defence, and put on your armour, eſpecially the ſhield of faith, that you may be able to quench the fiery darts of the devil. You have need at this time to put in practice our Lord's direction, "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation." Pray for wiſdom and ſkill to counteract him, and that you may not be ignorant of his devices: and pray particularly for grace to make you proof againſt all his falſe repreſentations of God and his providence to you; for he that durſt repreſent Job falſely to an all-ſeeing and all-knowing God, will with much boldneſs repreſent God falſely to you, who ſee and know ſo little. He will be ready to tempt you to think that God is angry with you, and dealing with you as an enemy: thus was Job tempted, Job xxxiii. 10, 11. "Behold, he findeth occaſions againſt me, he counteth me for his enemy; he putteth my feet in the ſtocks, he marketh all my paths." But obſerve what Elihu anſwers, "In this thou art not juſt; God is greater than man. Why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him; for he giveth not account

of any of his matters." But seeing I spoke before of the wrong thoughts of God, which we are apt to harbour in time of affliction, *Chap.* II. *Direct.* III. I shall proceed to speak of some other temptations wherewith Satan doth assault God's people when in distress; and furnish some answers thereto.

1. "*Saith the temper*, Thou art nothing but a "hypocrite; all thy religious performances have "been done in hypocrisy, to be seen of men; thou "never hast repented nor believed sincerely in "the sight of God."

Answ. I acknowledge there hath been much hypocrisy in me, but I hope it is not allowed and reigning hypocrisy; I always wrestled against it; wherefore I am not an hypocrite. I regarded the esteem of men too much, but I hope I value the esteem of God much more. My faith and repentance are weak, but I hope they are sincere. And, whatever defect and shortcomings have formerly cleaved to these graces in me, I do now unfeignedly repent of all my sins, and look to him that I have pierced and mourn; I am heartily willing to be justified by the righteousness of Christ alone, and to be cleansed and sanctified by his Spirit; and here I give up myself to Christ as my only Saviour. And this I hope is, through grace, true repenting and believing, which God will accept for Christ's sake, whatever my former defects have been.

Tempt. 2. But saith the temper, Thy repentance cannot be true; for thy heart is not broken, and thine eyes do not shed tears for sin.

Answ. It is my very great burden, and constant complaint to God, that I cannot attain to a greater measure of sorrow and contrition for sin; but yet it is my comfort that repentance is not to be confined to such degrees and symptoms of sorrow as some do win at. I hope I can say, through grace,

that my heart is ſet againſt all ſin, great and ſmall, and I would give all I have in the world to be wholly delivered from ſin.

Tempt. 3. Saith the temper, But thy day of grace is paſt, it is too late for thee to think of repenting or believing; God will not accept of thee now.

Anſw. But I hope it is not ſo with me, ſeeing God gives me a heart that pants after God and Chriſt, in the way of commanded duty. The offers of ſalvation through Chriſt, are made to all who believe and repent; and late penitents are not excluded from the benefit of theſe gracious offers more than others.

Tempt. 4. But ſaith the temper, Thou art none of God's elect; and if thou be not choſen to ſalvation, thou canſt not be ſaved.

Anſw. Secret things belong unto God, and it were preſumption in me to pry into his ſecret decrees; but one thing I am ſure of, that every ſoul that is choſen to faith and repentance, is alſo choſen to ſalvation: but I truſt God hath choſen me to the former, and therefore to the latter.

Tempt. 5. But ſaith the temper, You overvalue your graces and duties, and ſo they cannot be true and real.

Anſw. But I count them all but loſs and dung in compariſon of Chriſt. I deſire always to be deeply humbled under a ſenſe of my ſinfulneſs and unworthineſs, and to abhor every motion that would carry me away from Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, and would tempt me to rely on my graces or duties, or put them in the leaſt in Chriſt's room.

Tempt. 6. The iſſue of thy ſickneſs may be death, and thou art not ready, for thou haſt no aſſurance of thy ſalvation.

Anſw. A perfect certainty is not to be expected here; there will be ſtill ſome queſtionings, ſome doubts and fears; but theſe I reſolve not to indulge

now, but to break through all, that I may embrace Christ, and be found in him. The desires of my soul are to Christ, and the remembrance of his name: and such, I believe, he will not suffer to perish. "I believe, Lord help my unbelief."

Tempt. 7. But thou art a stranger to the invisible world; how wilt thou adventure into that world of spirits, with which thou hast so little acquaintance?

Answ. But Christ, who is my head and best friend, is no stranger to it: he is the Lord of that land, and provides mansions for all his people there; and he will receive every one of them home, and lodge them safely. The spirits of just men made perfect, were once what my spirit now is; they were strangers to that world before they came to it, as well as I; but their Head being in it, encouraged them to go to it; and now they rejoice in it as the kindly dwelling-place of all the saints.

Tempt. 8. But thou art vile, and God is infinitely pure and glorious; how canst thou think of approaching so near to him?

Answ. Though a weak eye be not able to look upon the sun, yet I hope to be fitted and strengthened for that glorious sight. Besides, God doth now appear to us in his Son Jesus Christ, where his infinite glory is pleasantly vailed, so as saints may behold him. These glorified souls above, were once vile as well as others; but their Saviour did cleanse them, and present them to the Father without spot or wrinkle. And whatever be my unworthiness, I am relieved by considering my union with Christ, and looking on the glory and dignity of my head. Surely God will not despise the members of his dear Son, nor trample on any that are his flesh and bones.

Tempt. 9. But what will become of thy wife and children, when thou art taken from them?

Answ. If I trust God so willingly with my soul

and my eternal concerns, why may I not truſt him with my relations alſo? Have I not ſeen how wonderfully he hath provided for others? Doth not every thing in the world depend upon his will and pleaſure? How eaſy is it then for God to ſupply his own?

Tempt. 10. But ſtill death is terrible to nature, even the king of terrors.

Anſw. But my Redeemer hath taſted death for me, and taken out its fearful ſting; he hath conquered death, and keeps the keys of death and hell. Wherefore, thro' him will I ſing, "O death where is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Tempt. 11. But it is terrible to think of appearing before God's tribunal, to be tried and judged.

Anſw. But my friend and interceſſor will be the judge there. Will Chriſt condemn the members of his own body, and theſe he hath ſo often comforted?

But, beſides all theſe, a holy God may ſometimes ſuffer the temper to aſſault his own people, in time of their affliction, with his fiery darts and his fierceſt battering engines, ſuch as temptations to atheiſm, blaſphemy, deſpair, &c. whereby their ſouls may be terribly ſhaken and ſore amazed.

Your relief, in this caſe, is to look up to your Head, and remember how he was himſelf buffeted by this enemy, and aſſaulted with the moſt odious temptations, that he might thereby get an experimental touch and feeling of your condition, in order to his ſympathizing with you, and relieving you from this enemy, whom he hath already conquered in your name. But, "For theſe things he will be inquired of by the houſe of Iſrael." You muſt act faith on your exalted Head.

CHAP. IV.

Containing ſome ſpecial directions to unregenerate perſons, when afflicted by ſickneſs or otherwiſe.

DIRECT. I. *Take a ſerious view of the miſerable condition of a Chriſtleſs perſon under ſickneſs or heavy affliction.*

1*ſt*, CONSIDER the vaſt difference betwixt your caſe, and that of a true believer: he hath ground of conſolation in the greateſt diſtreſs, but you have none. However ſharp the rod of correction be to him, yet it is in the hand of a father; but you have to do with an angry and ſin-revenging God: and who may ſtand in his ſight, if once he be angry? For he commands both the firſt and ſecond death, and he can ſend you both into the grave and hell at once, Rev. vi. 8. "Hell followed the pale horſe." Death is the king of terrors, but hell is a thouſand times more terrible. When God afflicts his children, he ſtands to them in the relation of a loving father; but he deals with you as an incenſed judge. Though he ſees it neceſſary, for their good, to chaſtiſe them, yet he doth it with a relenting heart; yea, every ſtroke goeth, as it were, to his heart: Iſa. lxiii. 9. "In all their affliction he was afflicted." But, when he ariſeth to puniſh his enemies, he ſtrikes them with hatred and deteſtation, as a man would do a toad or venemous creature. Though they cry, he hath no pity, Prov. i. 26. "I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh."

2*dly*, If your ſickneſs threaten you with death, what a dark and melancholy proſpect muſt you have of your approaching change? Why, O Chriſtleſs ſoul, it is what you are wholly unprepared for. The old houſe falls down about your ears, before

you have another lodging provided. When death caſts you to the door, you have not where to lay your head, unleſs it be on a bed of fire and brimſtone! O how ſurpriſing and fearful will the change be, that death will make on you! A change from earth to hell, from light to darkneſs, from comforts to terrors, from hope to deſpair, from the offers of grace to the revelation of wrath, a change from the ſociety of the ſaints on earth, to the company of the damned in hell. Whatever fond hopes of ſalvation you have now, your hope ſhall lead you no further than to the king of terrors; and then "your hope ſhall be cut off, and your truſt like a ſpider's web," Job viii. 14. Though it coſt you much pains to weave and ſupport this web now, it will prove a weak and ſlender defence to your ſoul; when death comes with his beſom of deſtruction, and ſweeps both you and it away to hell. You will then be taken from all the means of grace you have abuſed, and be for ever deprived of an opportunity of buying oil: your lamp ſhall go out at death, and never be lighted any more.

3*dly*, In this extremity you have no-where to look to for comfort. O Chriſtleſs ſinner, what will you do in the day of viſitation? To whom will you flee for help? Your houſes, your lands, your money, your honours, your companions, your relations, will all be miſerable comforters to you. Every thing will look black and diſmal round about you. If you look without you for help, you may ſee your friends weeping and lamenting your caſe; but this will do nothing but increaſe your vexation and miſery. If you look within you for relief, conſcience, that before you would not ſuffer to ſpeak, will meet you with bitter ſtings and upbraidings. It will bring to your view the ſins you had forgot, the time you have miſpent, the health you have miſimproven, the offers of grace you have refuſed, the

great ſalvation you have neglected. What folly was it for thee to provoke God and ſlight Chriſt, for a little worldly profit, or a little brutiſh pleaſure? Can theſe relieve thee, when the arrows of the Almighty ſtick within thee, and the terrors of God do ſet themſelves in array againſt thy ſoul? In the mean-time the devil, that tempted you to your ſoul-ruining courſe, will ſtep in, and repreſent your ſins in the blackeſt colours and aggravations, to render you altogether hopeleſs and deſperate. O ſinner, thou that refuſeſt reſt from Chriſt in the day of health and grace, ſhall find no eaſe from the creature in the day of ſickneſs and death. Your ſickneſs will allow no reſt to your body, and your ſins will permit no eaſe to your ſoul. You may expect the fulfilling of that threatening, Deut. xxviii. 65. "The Lord ſhall give thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and ſorrow of mind. And thy life ſhall hang in doubt before thee, and thou ſhalt have fear day and night. In the morning thou ſhalt ſay, Would God it were even! And at even thou ſhalt ſay, Would God it were morning! becauſe of the pain of thy body, and anguiſh of thy ſpirit."

DIRECT. II. *Let unregenerate perſons carefully improve their ſickneſs and affliction, as means to further their converſion; and pray that God may bleſs it for that end.*

MANY have begun their acquaintance with God, and with themſelves, in the time of affliction: the furnace is frequently the Spirit's work-houſe, where he forms his veſſels of praiſe. There are many who, while health and ſtrength continue, mind nothing but vain pleaſures; one day they go to their games and ſports, another day to their cups and laſcivious company, another day to viſiting their friends; and thus they ſpend the whole

time of their health and prosperity in sin and vanity. All the warnings, counsels and exhortations of parents, friends and ministers do them no good. They cannot endure to entertain a serious thought of God or Christ, of death, of heaven, of hell or judgment to come. But, when God doth cast them into sickness or some great affliction, they (through the blessing of God) begin to come to themselves, like the prodigal, and think of returning again to their father. Several instances to this purpose might be given. The earl of Rochester is a late one, whose life was notoriously lewd, profane and atheistical; and who had wickedly employed his wit and parts to the ridicule of religion; yet, when he was afflicted with pain and sickness, and brought to the gates of death, he began to entertain quite other apprehensions than he had done before; he professed he had serious and reverend thoughts of religion and holiness, which before he laughed at; he most earnestly and affectionately warned others to abandon their evil courses, and to live religiously and soberly, and to look on religion as the greatest reality in the world: he retracted all his impious and profane language, wherewith he used to reflect on the ways of godliness, and willingly attested all this under his hand.

Pray then for the divine blessing on your sickness, that it may contribute to the conversion of your soul, which it doth several ways: *1st,* By opening men's eyes to get a true sight of things, to behold religion in its true shape, and sin in its proper colours; hence the rod is said to give wisdom, Prov. xxix. 15. They who have mocked at religion, and made light of sin all their days, have been taught by bodily sickness to change their tune. Then they began to have esteem of the Bible, and to value and send for a pious minister, and to desire the prayers of the people of God; now they perceive sin to be bitter as gall and wormwood, they loathe and ab-

for that which they liked before; now the word of God makes as deep impreſſion on them, and particularly ſuch a word as that, Jer. ii. 19. "Know therefore and ſee, that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou haſt forſaken the Lord thy God."

2*dly*, Sickneſs helps to ſet the word preached home upon the heart. When God ſpeaks to us in the day of health and proſperity, we oft give him a deaf ear, Jer. xxii. 21. but when diſtreſs comes, it brings the words of God and of his miniſters to our remembrance, as it brought Joſeph's to the remembrance of his brethren, Gen. xliii. 21.

3*dly*, Sickneſs contributes to looſe a man's heart from the world, and to cool his love thereto; whereby a great hindrance of converſion is removed out of the way, and the man is made to ſay, "How vain and helpleſs are the world's comforts to me now! Theſe things I delighted in formerly, are taſteleſs to me at this time. There is no portion can ſuit my ſoul's needs but God himſelf."

4*thly*, It ſpurs a man on to prayer that formerly neglected it. When the prodigal is brought to diſtreſs, he ſays, "I will ariſe and go to my father." He forgat his father before, but now he will addreſs him, Hoſ. v. 15. "In their affliction they will ſeek me early." Thus the Lord frequently begins and promotes the converſion of ſouls to himſelf. And, O ſinner, if this be the fruit of thy ſickneſs, it will not be unto death, but the glory of God.

DIRECT. III. *Be careful to obey God's voice in the rod, and beware of ſlighting it.*

EVERY ſickneſs hath a meſſage from God, and his voice you ought to hearken to with reverence and attention, Micah vi. 9. What ſaith he to you at this time? O ſinner, he ſaith, "Retire from the world, think on death and eternity, ab-

hor theſe luſts and idols which God is ſmiting you for, flee ſpeedily to the ſtrong hold: Repent and be converted, that your ſins may be blotted out." This is God's voice to you, and conſider how provoking it will be to him, if you ſlight it.

1*ſt*, You will provoke God to ſlight your voice when you cry to him, and ſtop his ear againſt the voice of your ſupplications, Zech. vii. 13.

2*dly*, You will provoke God to ceaſe from being a reprover to you, ſo that he will ſpeak to you no more.

3*dly*, You will provoke him to bring heavier judgments on you, yea, ſo to draw his ſword of juſtice againſt you, that he will ſheathe it up no more, as he threatens, Ezek. xxi. 5.

4*thly*, God may break off all intercourſe and correſpondence with you, as with thoſe, Ezek. xx. 31. "As I live, ſaith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you."

5*thly*, He may ſeal you up for ever under your ſins, hardneſs and pollutions; and ſay to you, as to thoſe we read of, Ezek. xxiv. 13. Hoſ. iv. 7. Rev. xxii. 11. "Becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my fury to reſt upon thee. Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone. He that is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill." He that is hardened againſt the voice of my rods, let him be hardened ſtill. Well then, O ſinners, while God is in ſpeaking terms with you, hearken to his voice, and obey it; ſay, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

DIRECT. IV. *Caſt back your eyes upon the ſins of your by-paſt life, and labour to be deeply humbled for them before the Lord.*

SEEING you are ſummoned to prepare for going to the judgment-ſeat of God, where your ſoul is to receive its final ſentence, labour to prevent the terror of that appearance, by your judging yourſelf before-hand. And this you muſt do, by ſummoning yourſelf before the bar of conſcience, examining narrowly into your ſtate, accuſing and condemning yourſelf for your ſins. And ſee that you be impartial in this work, willing to know the truth, and diſcover the worſt of your caſe. You muſt ſee and be duly ſenſible of your danger, otherwiſe you cannot think to eſcape it. Take a narrow view of your ſins, in their nature, number, aggravations and deſervings. And, in order to this, if thou haſt any meaſure of ſtrength for it, let the expoſition of the ten commandments, in our Larger Catechiſm, be diſtinctly read over unto thee. Make a pauſe upon every queſtion, and ſay within thyſelf, "Have I not omitted what is here required by God? And, have I not committed what is here forbidden by God? How oft have I repeated theſe ſins? How long have I lived in the practice of them? O! do not ſo many years ſins need a very ſerious repentance, a very deep humiliation! O! doth not ſuch a vile ſinner as I, ſtand greatly in neeed of Chriſt to be my cautioner and ranſomer for ſuch a vaſt number of ſins? Will not their weight preſs me eternally down to the loweſt hell, if they remain unpardoned, and be laid upon my back?" Wherefore view them cloſely, and confeſs them particularly before God.

1*ſt*, In the firſt place, bewail thy original ſin, the fountain of all thy actual tranſgreſſions, as did David, Pſal. li. 5. "Behold, I was ſhapen in iniquity, and in ſin did my mother conceive me."

2*dly*, Acknowledge and mourn over the ſinful outbreakings of thy life, whereby thou haſt diſhonoured God, and grieved his holy Spirit: and eſpecially ſins againſt light.

3*dly*, Be humbled for thy ſins of omiſſion, for neglecting of commanded duties, particularly for the neglect of prayer in ſecret, and of family-religion.

4*thly*, Mourn for the loſs of precious time. Alas! for the time of youth miſpent, many Sabbath-days trifled away!

5*thly*, Lament thy long ſlighting of Chriſt, and ſalvation through his righteouſneſs, which ſo preſſingly hath been offered to thee in the goſpel.

6*thly*, Bewail thy ſtifling the convictions, and quenching the motions of the Spirit, and thereby provoking him to depart from you.

7*thly*, Mourn for thy unthankfulneſs to God for mercies and deliverances, which might have allured you to repentance and newneſs of life.

8*thly*, Confeſs thy ſtubbornneſs under former afflictions, which hath provoked God to ſend new trials upon you.

9*thly*, Be humbled for thy earthly-mindedneſs, in that thou haſt all thy days been careful and cumbered about many things, and haſt neglected the one thing neceſſary.

10*thly*, Mourn for the lateneſs of thy repentance, and thy prodigious folly in delaying ſo long to bethink thyſelf, and to turn to the Lord. "Oh! how unwiſely have I acted, to miſpend the time of health, and delay ſo great a work till now, that I am laid on a ſick-bed! And now, if I die before I am converted, I am loſt for ever. O Lord, I am aſhamed and confounded at my madneſs and folly, and have no excuſe to plead for myſelf, but muſt ſtand afar off, with the poor publican, and ſmite upon my breaſt, and cry, "God be merciful to me a ſinner."

DIRECT. V. *Flee preſently to Jeſus Chriſt by a true faith, and cloſe with him as offered to you in the goſpel.*

ART thou ſenſible, O ſinner, of thy grievous guilt and ill-deſervings before God? Then do not deſpair; for Jeſus Chriſt, who hath offered to divine juſtice, an all-ſufficient ſacrifice for ſin, is offering himſelf to thee, ſaying, O diſtreſſed ſinner, "Look unto me and be ſaved. Turn unto me, why will ye die? Come unto me, heavy laden ſoul, and I will give you reſt. He that cometh to me, I will in no wiſe caſt out." Will not ſuch gracious words, ſuch moving calls, melt thy heart within thee, and make thee cry to him, "Lord Jeſus, I flee to thee as my refuge for deliverance from ſin, and protection from the wrath to come; I look to thy wounds, I truſt in thy righteouſneſs, I depend on thy merit, I lie at thy feet; and this I am reſolved to do, as long as I have breath to draw in the world."

DIRECT. VI. *Call for the Elders of the Church, that they may pray over you in your ſickneſs.*

THIS is the apoſtle James' directions to the ſick, James v. 14. He doth not ſay, If any be ſick, let him ſend for the phyſicians, but for the elders or miniſters.

It is true, phyſicians are to be called, but not in the firſt place. It was Aſa's fault, that, in his diſeaſe, he ſought not to the Lord, but to the phyſicians; and, alas! how many follow his example! miniſters are only called for in the laſt place, and very often when time is paſt, the ſick being at the point of death, and ſcarce capable to ſpeak or hear. But if you deſire to reap benefit by the inſtructions and prayers of miniſters, call for them timeouſly, and open your caſe unto them;

ſeek their counſel, and beg for their prayers. It is their office to teach and pray for you, and they have authority to offer ſalvation to you through Chriſt, and to miniſter comfort to them that are caſt down: wherefore, a bleſſing may be expected on their adminiſtrations and performances more than others. Hence God ſaid to Abimelech of Abraham, Gen. xx. 7. "He is a prophet, and he ſhall pray for thee." And to Job's friends concerning Job, Chap. xlii. 8. "Go to my ſervant Job, and he ſhall pray for you, for him will I accept; leſt that I deal with you after your folly.

And, *laſtly*; Remember, that as the apoſtle James injoins the ſick to call for the elders to pray over them, ſo at the ſame time he directs you, James v. 16. to confeſs your ſins one to another, Chriſtian to Chriſtian, one friend to another, the people to their miniſters. Not that this gives any warrant for the Papiſts their auricular confeſſions, which they force upon all men, to their prieſts, as a ſatisfaction for ſin, and whereby they rack their conſciences (when they feel no diſtreſs) to confeſs their moſt ſecret ſins, and to enumerate them all under pain of damnation; and which they uſe as a politic to dive into the ſecrets of princes, ſtates, and all private perſons; but as Luther, Calvin, Beza, and many other orthodox divines do teach, it is very profitable and neceſſary for theſe that are inwardly troubled with a ſenſe of their ſins, to eaſe and diſburden their conſciences, by confeſſing them to the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, in order to their receiving ſuitable counſels, and conſolations from them, ſuch as Chriſt hath left in his word for contrite-hearted penitents.

Thus let every man in ſickneſs uſe all appointed means for preparing his ſoul for a future ſtate. Thy preparation will by no means haſten death, but ſweeten it to you. Death muſt ſurely have a moſt formidable aſpect to an unprepared ſinner; he may

ſalute it, as Ahab did Elijah, "Haſt thou found me, O mine enemy?" Why? it brings heavy and doleful tidings to him. But a prepared ſoul may ſalute death, welcome, O my friend! Thou bringeſt me tidings of great joy; everlaſting deliverance from ſin, and all the bitter fruits of it. I ſhall never complain of theſe any more.

CHAP. V.

Containing directions to the people of God, when the Lord is pleaſed to recover them from ſickneſs and diſtreſs.

DIRECT. I. *It is very proper, both under ſickneſs and after it, to examine if the affliction be ſanctified to you, and hath come from the love of God.*

IT would be very comfortable for us to know, that the afflictions which God viſits us with, are not the puniſhment of a judge, but the chaſtiſement of a father; that they do not proceed from wrath, but from love; that they are not curſes, but bleſſings to us. Now, the beſt way of knowing this is, by the effects which they work and produce in us, through the bleſſing of God.

1*ſt*, Canſt thou ſay, that thy affliction hath humbled thee in the ſight of God, and made thee to confeſs and bewail thy ſins and ſtrayings from God, as the procuring cauſe thereof? Hath it been like Moſes' rod, that ſmote the rock and fetched out much water? Did you water your couch with tears, and mourn humbly before God for all thy God-provoking ſins? Then it is a good ſign ſickneſs is ſanctified.

2*dly*, Doth thy affliction drive thee nearer God, and cauſe thee aim at cloſer communion with God in duty than formerly, ſaying, "However careleſs and overly I have been in duty in time paſt, it is ſurely good for me now to draw near to God?" Then thy ſickneſs is a bleſſing to thee.

3*dly*, Affliction is ſanctified, when the corruption and deceitfulneſs of the heart is the more diſcovered and laid open to the view of the ſoul; ſo as the man is made to abhor himſelf in duſt and aſhes, and cry out as the leper, unclean, unclean. I never could have thought my heart was ſo wicked as I now ſee it.

4*thly*, It is a ſanctified ſickneſs, that purgeth the heart and changeth the life, and gives a dead ſtroke to thy ſins and idols, and makes thee to loathe and abhor them more than ever, ſaying, with Ephraim, "What have I to do any more with idols."

5*thly*, It is a bleſſed rod, when grace is more quickened and ſtirred up thereby, and the man turns more fruitful in holy duties and good works; when it is a budding and bloſſoming rod like to Aaron's, Numb. xvii. It is recorded there of Aaron's rod, that it brought forth buds, bloomed bloſſoms, and yielded almonds. So it is happy with us, when our rods and ſickneſſes do produce in us, not only the buds of a profeſſion, or the bloſſoms or ſome beginnings of a reformation, but even cauſe us to yield almonds, fruit ſavoury to God. Is conſcience become more tender with reſpect to ſin? Are we more jealous over our hearts? Are we more fervent in prayer, more lively in praiſe, more mortified to the world, more deſirous of communion with God? Then may we ſay with David, "It is good for us we have been afflicted:" and with Hezekiah, "Thou haſt, in love to my ſoul, delivered it from the pit of deſtruction."

DIRECT. II. *Make conſcience of offering to God the ſacrifice of thankſgiving, upon his recovering thee from ſickneſs or any diſtreſs.*

THE Pſalmiſt gives us this direction from God, Pſal. l. 14, 15. and he ſhews us that it was his own practice in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. cxvi. 17. Pſal. ciii. 1, 2, 3, &c. The command is juſt, let us obey it; the example is excellent, let us imitate it: "Praiſe is comely for the upright." Here I ſhall give ſome motives and advices.

1ſt, God, who is the author of all thy mercies and deliverances, gives you tongues for this very end, that you may bleſs and praiſe him for theſe mercies, James iii. 9. Hence man's tongue is called his glory above the reſt of the creatures, Pſ. lvii. 8. There is none in the creation ſo endued and qualified for praiſing God as man is. Angels have reaſon and minds, whereby they adore and admire God's goodneſs and excellency, but have no tongues to praiſe him; beaſts have tongues, but without ſpeech or reaſon to uſe them; but man hath both reaſon and ſpeech, that he may both admire God's goodneſs, and with his tongue ſound forth God's praiſe. See then, O believer, that you uſe your tongue to anſwer the end of your creation. God loſeth his due rent of praiſe from the reſt of the world, but he expects it from his children, whom he hath formed for this end, and on whom he hath beſtowed many diſtinguiſhing favours.

2dly, The ſacrifice of thankſgiving is moſt pleaſing and acceptable to God. He loves your tears and prayers, O believer, but much more your praiſes. How well pleaſed was our Lord with the poor leper Samaritan, that returned and gave him thanks for curing his bodily diſtemper? Luke xvii. He diſmiſſed him with a ſpecial bleſſing, and

cured him of his ſoul's diſeaſes, as well as of his body's. And therefore,

3*dly*, Conſider that thankfulneſs for any mercy received, is a moſt profitable courſe for yourſelf; for it is the way to get more and better bleſſings beſtowed upon you, according to Pſal. lxvii. 5, 6. "Let the people praiſe thee, O God: then ſhall the earth yield her increaſe; and God, even our own God, ſhall bleſs us." Thankſgiving for former mercies is a kindly way of petitioning for new favours, and God will underſtand it in this ſenſe.

4*thly*, God is ſo well pleaſed with the duty of thankſgiving, that he honours it to be the eternal work of heaven. Whereas other graces, ſuch as faith, hope, and repentance, will then be melted into love and joy for ever; ſo other duties of worſhip, ſuch as reading, hearing, and praying, will then be changed into that of praiſe and thankſgiving; the glorified company above will never be weary of this work; and ſhall not we delight in it now, when God is calling us to it by ſo many new mercies?

In the next place, that thou mayeſt offer the ſacrifice of thankſgiving to God for thy recovery, with gracious acceptance, I ſhall lay before you the following advices.

1. See that your heart be touched with a ſenſe of the greatneſs of the mercy, and of the goodneſs of God manifeſted therein. We muſt put a due value upon our mercies, and have our hearts affected with God's kind dealings towards us in them; if we would be rightly thankful to God, the author of them. Hence it was that David called upon his heart, and all within him, to bleſs the Lord for his benefits, Pſal. ciii. 1. and, in Pſal. cxxxviii. 1. he ſaith, "I will praiſe thee with my whole heart." As in an inſtrument of muſic, the more the ſound comes out of the belly of it,

it is the ſweeter; ſo our praiſe is the more acceptable to God, when the heart is full of gracious affections.

2. Let your praiſe be the native reſult of faith and love in your ſoul, otherwiſe it will be but an empty ſound. Faith is neceſſary to draw by the vail, and ſhew us the perfections of the inviſible God, who is the ſpring and author of all our mercies; love gives a deep ſenſe of his goodneſs, enlargeth the heart towards God, and opens the lips to ſhew forth his praiſes.

3. Study to have a deep ſenſe of your own unworthineſs and ill-deſervings at the Lord's hand, on the account of your ſins and ill improvement of former deliverances, ſaying, with Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 10. "I am not worthy of the leaſt of all thy mercies."

4. Look above inſtruments and ſecond cauſes, and do not aſcribe your recovery to phyſicians or outward means, but to the Lord, the prime author of it, whoſe bleſſing alone it is that gives efficacy and ſucceſs to the appointed means, and by whoſe mercy only we are ſpared and brought back from the gates of the grave. To this the apoſtle attributes Epaphroditus his recovery, Phil. ii. 27. "Indeed he was ſick, nigh unto death; but God had mercy on him." Hence we are told, 1 Sam. ii. 6. "The Lord bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up."

5. Obſerve narrowly the remarkable circumſtances of the Lord's goodneſs, and the ſweet ingredients of thy mercies: as for inſtance, (1.) How diſcernible the Lord's hand was in thy deliverance, which obligeth thee to ſay, "Surely this is the finger of God! This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in mine eyes." (2.) How thy deliverance came to thee as the return of prayer, that makes thee ſay, Surely he is a prayer-hearing

God. (3.) How deliverance came, when there was but little ground to hope for it. See how Hezekiah obſerved this ingredient in his recovery from ſickneſs, Iſa. xxxviii. 10, 11. "I ſaid, in the cutting off of my days, I ſhall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the reſidue of my years. I ſaid, I ſhall not ſee the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living: I ſhall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world." Ver. 15. "What ſhall I ſay? He hath both ſpoken to me, and himſelf hath done it." Sometimes God ſends deliverances to his people, when they are moſt hopeleſs, and ſaying, with the captives in Babylon, Ezek. xxxvii. 11. "Behold, our bones are dried, and our hopes are loſt, and we are cut off for our parts." (4.) Remember how the extremity of thy diſtreſs was God's opportunity of ſending relief. Abraham never forgot the ſeaſonableneſs of God's appearing for him in his extreme need upon mount Moriah, when he called the name of the place Jehovah-Jireh, for preſerving the memorial of it; "In the mount of the Lord it will be ſeen." So doth David, Pſal. cxvi. 6. "I was brought low, and he helped me."

6. Let the preſent deliverance bring all former mercies to thy remembrance, that ſo thou mayeſt praiſe God for them all, whether they be national or perſonal mercies, public or private, ſpiritual or temporal. New mercies ſhould revive the memory of the old, and all of them ſhould come above board at ſuch a time; ſo doth the Pſalmiſt direct, Pſal. cv. 2. "Sing to the Lord, talk ye of all his wondrous works." And what he directs others to, he practiſes himſelf in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. cxvi. 12. "What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

7. Be ready to communicate to others an account of the Lord's kind dealings towards you,

and the ſweet ingredients of his mercies; and particularly of his ſending ſpiritual deliverance to your ſoul, as well as outward deliverance to your body, when he is pleaſed to do ſo; and do this in order to recommend the ſervice of God to others, and to engage and invite them to aſſiſt you in bleſſing and praiſing the Lord. We ſee how David obſerved his ſoul-deliverances, Pſ. cxvi. 7, 8. and declares his experience to others, Pſ. xxii. 22. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midſt of the congregation will I praiſe thee," Pſal. lxvi. 16. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my ſoul."

Laſtly, Remember always to give thanks for mercies to the Father, in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as directed, Eph. v. 20. Your ſpiritual ſacrifices are only acceptable to God, when you offer them up by Jeſus Chriſt, 1 Pet. ii. 5. As we muſt ſeek all our mercies in Chriſt's name, ſo we muſt give thanks for them alſo in his name. He is the Mediator of our praiſes as well as of our prayers. Believers have not one mercy but what comes ſwimming to them in Chriſt's blood, and is the fruit of his death and purchaſe to them; and therefore he is to be owned and looked to in the receiving of every mercy. And as Chriſt is the only Mediator for conveying bleſſings and mercies from God to us, ſo he is the ſole Mediator for conveying all our ſervices and ſpiritual ſacrifices to God. God accepts of them only as they are perfumed by Chriſt's meritorious ſacrifice, and potent interceſſion.

DIRECT. III. *When the Lord is pleaſed to grant thee any ſignal mercy or deliverance from trouble, beware of forgetting the Lord's kindneſs towards thee.*

FOrgetting of God's remarkable kind providences, is an evil we are naturally prone unto, when we are in a proſperous ſtate. Hence it is,

that the Spirit of God gives ſo many cautions againſt it in his word; and the ſaints of God do ſo ſolemnly charge their own ſouls to beware of it, as in Pſal. ciii. 2 "Bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul, and forget not all his benefits: who healeth all thy diſeaſes, who redeemeth thy life from deſtruction." Forget not his benefits, but carefully preſerve and treaſure them up in thy memory. It was uſual for ſaints, under the Old Teſtament, to ſet up ſome viſible monument to remind them of God's ſingular favours to them; they erected ſtones, and built altars to be memorials of the mercies they received, and put names on theſe places for this end. Let all this teach you to guard againſt this evil of forgetting the Lord's kind providence, in recovering you from ſickneſs.

You are guilty of this evil, when you do not duly value the mercy, but let it paſs as a turn of common providence. When you let the impreſſion of the mercy wear ſoon off your hearts; when you make a bad uſe of it, or do not rightly improve it to God's glory and your own ſoul's good: when you do not put on new reſolutions to walk more exactly, live more fruitfully, and ſerve God more holily and humbly, then are you guilty of forgetting his benefits.

This is an evil moſt grievous and provoking to a good and gracious God, as is evident from the many heavy complaints he makes of his people for it, as in Judges viii. 34. Pſal. lxxviii. 11. cvi. 13. Wherefore watch and pray againſt it.

DIRECT. IV. *Enquire after theſe fruits of righteouſneſs, which are the genuine effects of affliction in the children of God, who are duly exerciſed thereby.*

THE Apoſtle ſpeaks of theſe fruits, Heb. xii. 11. as natively following upon ſanctified afflictions and a kindly exerciſe of ſpirit under them. And

And therefore it is your duty to enquire if they be produced in you.

1*ſt*, The increaſe of true repentance is one of theſe fruits which is the product of ſanctified trials; Job found it in himſelf, on the back of his afflictions, Job xlii. 6. "Now I abhor myſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes." It would be happy if we could find our hearts more ſoft and melting upon the view of ſin, after we have been in the furnace of affliction.

2*dly*, Another fruit is the improvement of faith. The afflicted believer is taught to look to and depend more upon God for help in time of need, and leſs upon the creature. He now ſees, that vain is the help of man in the day of calamity, and that God in Chriſt is the only proper object of the ſoul's truſt. This was the fruit of the apoſtle's affliction, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9, 10. "We were preſſed out of meaſure, above ſtrength, inſomuch that we deſpaired even of life. We had the ſentence of death in ourſelves, that we ſhould not truſt in ourſelves, but in God that raiſeth the dead; who delivered us from ſo great a death, and doth deliver; in whom we truſt that he will yet deliver."

3*dly*, Humility and low thoughts of ourſelves is one of the fruits of righteouſneſs which ſanctified affliction doth yield. How proud and lofty was Nebuchadnezzar before his affliction! Dan. iv. 29. 30. But afterwards he was made to own God, and humbly ſubmit to him as his ſupreme and incontrolable ſovereign, and to acknowledge, that theſe who walk in pride, he is able to abaſe, verſe 27. This was God's deſign in the various trials of his people Iſrael in the wilderneſs, Deut. vii. 16. "That he might humble thee, and prove thee, and do thee good at thy latter end." See then, O believer, if this fruit be produced in thee.

4*thly*, Another fruit is the ſpirit of prayer and ſupplication. This was viſible in the Pſalmiſt's caſe,

after God had delivered him from the ſorrows of death, and heard his voice, Pſal. cxvi. 2. "Therefore, ſays he, will I call upon him as long as I live." O, ſaith the true believer, God's mercy to me in trouble, and his ſending me relief when I cried to him, will make me love prayer the better, and engage me to be more diligent in it all my days; for I ſtill ſee I have daily need of his helping hand.

5thly, Heavenly-mindedneſs is a fruit of ſanctified affliction. Before, the man was inclined to that language, It is good for us to be here; let us build tabernacles in this lower world. But now he turns his tongue, and changeth his thoughts, and ſaith, with the Pſalmiſt, "It is good for me to draw nigh to God. Ariſe, let us depart, this is not our reſt." This world is nothing but the houſe of our pilgrimage, heaven only is our home.

6thly, Another fruit of ſanctified trials is, greater love to God than formerly. How much was David's heart warmed with love and gratitude to God upon the back of his affliction, ſo that he wants words to expreſs the affections of his ſoul! Pſal. cxvi. 1. "I will love the Lord, becauſe he hath heard my voice—I was brought low, but he helped me. Thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.—What ſhall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me?"

7thly, Learning and keeping of God's word is a fruit of ſanctified affliction, Pſalm cxix. 67. 71. Let us enquire if this fruit be produced in us after ſickneſs: Do we attend to the word more cloſely? Do we believe it more firmly? Do we embrace its offers more earneſtly? Do we rely on its promiſes more ſtedfaſtly? And do we live more in the expectation of that glory which the word dtoh reveal to us? Then it is good for us that we have been afflicted, we have learned more of God's word.

8*thly*, Tenderneſs of conſcience is a happy fruit of ſanctified trouble, when the believer, after it, becomes exceedingly afraid of ſin, and of making new wounds in his conſcience. He cannot think of adventuring again upon any known ſin; for the ſmart of former wounds, and the pain they occaſioned in his ſoul when diſtreſs lay upon him, makes deep and laſting impreſſions on his mind, as it did on the afflicted church, Lam. iii. 19, 20. "Remembering mine affliction and my miſery, the wormwood and the gall, my ſoul hath them ſtill in remembrance, and is humbled within me." Now, ſuch fruits of righteouſneſs are an evidence we have been ſuitably exerciſed under affliction; O to find them produced in us after ſickneſs is over.

DIRECT. V. *Be careful to perform theſe reſolutions, engagements or vows, you have come under in the time of ſickneſs, and walk ſuitably to them.*

AS a time of ſickneſs and affliction is a proper ſeaſon for making vows to God, and binding our ſouls with reſolutions to mortify ſin in the heart, and purge it away from the life, and to be diligent in duty, and walk more humble with God, ſo a time of recovery from ſickneſs is a proper ſeaſon for paying and performing theſe vows. This was the royal Pſalmiſt's practice in ſuch a caſe, Pſal. cxvi. 6. 16, 17, 18. "I was brought low, and he helped me. Truly I am thy ſervant, I am thy ſervant. I will offer to thee the ſacrifice of thankſgiving. I will pay my vows unto the Lord, now, in the preſence of all his people." Now, for your aſſiſtance in this matter, I offer you theſe few advices.

1*ſt*, Defer not to pay your vows, but be ſpeedy, and take the firſt opportunity to pay them. Delays in this caſe are moſt dangerous. Solomon, that wiſe man, was ſenſible of this, which made him

give this advice, Eccl. v. 4. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it."

2*dly*, Be ſtill jealous of thy heart, which is prone to deal treacherouſly with God after affliction is over; the Iſraelites practice is a ſad inſtance of this truth, Pſal. lxxviii. 34, &c. "When he ſlew them, then they ſought him; and they returned and enquired early after God, &c. Nevertheleſs they did flatter him with their mouths, and they lied to him with their tongues; for their heart was not right with him, neither were they ſtedfaſt in his covenant." The purpoſes of many in affliction, are like the vows of mariners in a ſtorm; they are the firſt things which they forget and break, when once they win ſafe aſhore. However penitent ſome ſeem to be in ſickneſs, yet, when they recover from it, they ſoon return to their old ſins again. They are like metals in a furnace, they melt and turn liquid while in it; but, when out, they ſoon return to their old hardneſs. There is good reaſon for that caution the Lord gives us, Mal. ii. 16. "Therefore take heed to your ſpirit, that ye deal not treacherouſly."

3*dly*, Cry continually for ſtrength from above, to enable you to perform your vows. The Pſalmiſt took this courſe, and found it ſucceſsful, Pſalm cxxxviii. 3. "In the day when I cried to thee, thou anſweredſt me, and ſtrengthenedſt me with ſtrength in my ſoul." And forget not, O believer, that God has treaſured up ſtrength for thee in thy head and ſurety Chriſt Jeſus: wherefore, be ſtill borrowing from him, for the performing of all thy engagements, 2 Tim. ii. 1. "My ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus." Put thy treacherous heart in thy Surety's hand; for though thou art weak, yet thy Redeemer is ſtrong. Whenever then you firſt perceive your heart begin to ſtart aſide from God, be ſure to check it, and look up to God in Chriſt for ſtrength to ſecure it againſt treachery

and perfidious dealing: cry, with the Pſalmiſt, "Be ſurety for thy ſervant for good."

4*thly*, Guard diligently againſt thy predominant ſin, the ſin that hath moſt eaſily beſet thee, the ſin that was moſt bitter and uneaſy to thee in the day of diſtreſs. Keep a narrow eye upon it now; for, if once that ſin be got vanquiſhed, the reſt will the more eaſily be put to flight.

5*thly*, Be frequently meditating on thy vows, and on the condition thou waſt in when they were taken on; and ſtudy to keep alive in thy heart the ſame apprehenſion of things after ſickneſs, which thou hadſt in the time of it. How vain and comfortleſs did the world and its vanities then appear to thee! How awful were the truths of God on thy ſpirit! How far preferable was the loving-kindneſs of God to thee, than life! How precious was Chriſt then in thy eyes! O that your judgment, thoughts and impreſſions of theſe things may continue ſtill the ſame!

6*thly*, Keep up the impreſſions of the preciouſneſs of time, that you may diligently improve it: and ſhake off ſloath and idleneſs. Remember what a view you got in the time of ſickneſs of long-laſting eternity, and what a trouble it was to you to look back and ſee how much time you have loſt in ſin and vanity. When ſometimes we are brought to the brink of eternity, the near views we then get of its vaſtneſs and unchangeableneſs are ſometimes ſo awful and amazing to us, that we are ready to think, though we had Methuſelah's years to live, it would be unreaſonable wilfully to miſpend one hour of them all. Well, then, is ſickneſs over, our time ſo ſhort, and ſo little of it remaining behind; will we be ſo fooliſh, as to be laviſh of it ſtill, and trifle it away as before?

7*thly*, Set a ſpecial mark upon all theſe ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, that made death

to look grim and ghaſtly upon you in the time of ſickneſs, and againſt which you reſolved; and ſee to get every one of them amended and removed. Remember and conſider how ſad it will be for you, if ſickneſs find you again in the very ſame ſins which formerly ſtung you. What will you ſay to conſcience, when it ſhall challenge you? How will you look death in the face, if it ſhould find you living in the very ſame ſins you formerly mourned for, and promiſed againſt? Death would then be the king of terrors to thy ſoul indeed.

O then, mind thy vows, and ſay with the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. lvi. 12, 13. "Thy vows are upon me, O God: I will render praiſes to thee. For thou haſt delivered my ſoul from death: wilt not thou deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"

CHAP. VI.

Containing Directions to the Unregenerate, when they are recovered from Sickneſs, and reſtored to health.

DIRECT. I. *Seeing the afflictions of the wicked are unſanctified, it is neceſſary to examine what ſort of affliction yours hath been, and what fruits it hath produced in you.*

I HAVE in the preceding chapter ſhewed, that the afflictions of believers are fatherly chaſtiſements, proceeding from love; that they are ſanctified, and yield the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs. I have given the marks of ſanctified afflictions, and mentioned the happy fruits which they produce in the children of God.

On the other hand, it is neceſſary to let Chriſtleſs perſons know, that their afflictions are of a different kind; they are even puniſhments from

God, as a judge, proceeding from wrath: they are unſanctified to them, and produce no fruits, but what are bitter and unſavoury.

Well, then, O Chriſtleſs ſoul, thou haſt reaſon to ſuſpect the worſt concerning thy ſickneſs, that it hath not been ſanctified, and its fruits are not good. O then labour to know the truth of the matter, that thou mayeſt be humbled under a ſenſe of thy miſery, and flee to Jeſus Chriſt for relief. And, for thy aſſiſtance in this enquiry, I ſhall give ſome marks of unſanctified afflictions.

1*ſt*, If ſickneſs hath not humbled thee under a ſenſe of thy ſins, the procuring cauſe thereof, nor any-wiſe hath weakened ſin in thee, nor reclaimed thee from it, but it remaineth in thee as ſtrong as ever; it is a ſign thy affliction is unſanctified. This was the caſe of thoſe of whom God complaineth, Jer. ii. 30. "In vain have I ſmitten your children; they received no correction." As if he had ſaid, The phyſic I gave them, did not purge out ſin, nor weaken corruption in the leaſt. They have been ſtricken, but not grieved for ſin; the fire hath burned round about them, but they have not laid ſin to heart, that kindled the flame.

2*dly*, It is a mark of unſanctified affliction, when it hath no influence upon a ſinner to bring him to a ſerious communing with his own heart concerning the ſtate of his ſoul, and to enquire in what terms he ſtands with God that afflicts him. God's voice by affliction is that in Haggai i. 7. "Now, conſider your ways." In the day of adverſity conſider where you are, what you are, what you have done, what is the meaning of the rod, what will be the iſſue of it through eternity, in caſe it hath a commiſſion to cut the thread of life. Now, when a man remains ſtupid and careleſs about theſe important matters, and never noticeth the voice of affliction ſo as to enquire ſeriouſly about his ſoul's condition; "Am

I under a covenant of works, or a covenant of grace? Am I a child of God, or an enemy of God? Have I fled to the city of refuge, or am I ſtill in a ſhelterleſs ſtate? Am I ſtill under a cloud of wruth, or am I brought under the banner of love?" I ſay, where there are no ſuch inquiries, the affliction is unſanctified.

3*dly*, It is a certain ſign of unſanctified affliction, when a perſon grows worſe by it, and revolts the more he is ſtricken, like theſe, Iſa i. 5.

Queſt. When may it be ſaid that a perſon grows worſe by affliction?

Anſ. 1. When the ſinner's heart turns harder than it was before; ſo every plague on Egypt increaſed the plague of hardneſs in Pharaoh's heart. It fares with many hearts as with iron that is often heated in the fire, and quenched in the water, it ſtill increaſeth in hardneſs. 2. When a perſon giveth way to impatience and murmuring againſt God, while he afflicts him. 3. When the luſts of the heart grow more ſtrong and impetuous, and afterwards rage the more that they have been ſtopt in their courſe by affliction. In ſuch caſes a perſon grows worſe by the rod.

DIRECT. II. *Conſider the great danger of not being bettered by ſickneſs, and of not complying with the voice of God's rod.*

GOD's voice by his rod doth loudly call ſinners to repentance, and fleeing to the Lord Jeſus Chriſt for refuge from wrath. Now, when this voice is not hearkened to, but men go on in their ſecure and ſinful courſe as before, God is highly provoked, and the iſſue will be terrible: for,

1*ſt*, Though ſickneſs be removed, and the furnace of affliction be cooled for the time; yet the wrath that kindled it continues ſtill to burn. And

you have ground to fear, leſt you be ranked among theſe who are the generation of God's wrath, againſt whom he will have indignation for ever.

2*dly*, If leſſer rods do not awaken you, you may expect greater and ſorer judgments are coming on you. Yea, God may cauſe them to come rolling thick upon you, as waves and billows in a ſtorm, one upon the neck of another. The great depths, both above and below, may be opened together; the diſpleaſure of God, and wrath of men may conſpire and meet to pour out themſelves as water-ſpouts upon you at once: and to whom then will ye look for help?

3*dly*, The Lord may give over dealing with you, or uſing any further means to reclaim you; he may refuſe to correct you any more, or beſtow a rod upon you for your good, and ſay of you, as of Ephraim, Hoſ. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone."

4*thly*, The Lord may give you up to ſpiritual plagues and judgments; and, indeed, this is commonly the reſult of obſtinacy and incorrigibleneſs under outward rods. When Iſrael would not hearken to God's voice, he gave them up to their own hearts' luſts, Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 12. Now, theſe plagues are the ſevereſt of all others. External judgments are God's rods, but ſpiritual judgments are his ſwords, which pierce the very ſoul. Blindneſs of mind, hardneſs of heart, ſearedneſs of conſcience, vile affections, and a reprobate ſenſe, are the very forerunners of hell and damnation. Theſe who are impenitent and unfruitful under outward afflictions, have cauſe to tremble leſt God be provoked to inflict theſe ſpiritual judgments.

5*thly*, Be aſſured, though God ſpare you long, yet the glaſs of his forbearance will at length run out; God's patience towards ſinners hath a term and bound, over which it will not paſs. The time

will come, when a long-ſuffering God will at laſt ſay, "My Spirit ſhall no longer ſtrive;" and the angel will cry, as Rev. xiv. 7. "The hour of God's judgment is come." You that abuſe God's patience, and preſume upon it, his treaty of peace will end with you in a little, and the maſter of the houſe will riſe up and ſhut to the door. Then patience will come down, and juſtice will aſcend the ſtage, and trample upon, and triumph over, all that abuſe divine patience. Sodom was a wonder of God's patience for a long time, but now it is a laſting monument of his anger.

6thly, If you be not bettered by God's rod or ſparing mercies, then your preſervation at preſent will be nothing but a reſervation for the day of God's wrath. And the longer your cup of ſin is a-filling, the fuller ſhall the cup of God's wrath be for you: By your impenitence and abuſe of God's patience, you treaſure up wrath for yourſelves againſt the day of wrath, Rom. ii. 4. And though you be delivered from ſome judgments, you are reſerved for worſe, yea, for ſeven times worſe, according to Lev. xxvi. 23, 24. Nay, there is a ruining blow deſigned againſt you, both ſoul and body, as ſoon as your cup is full; and the ax is already laid to the root of the tree, Mat. iii. 10. One blow of God's ax will cut you off for ever.

Remember this, O ſinner, though God's hand be lifted off you at preſent, and his meſſenger death be for a little recalled, yet he will quickly return, and knock ſo loud at your door, as not to be refuſed. And, what will you do in the day of viſitation? How ghaſtly muſt the pale horſe be, when hell follows him at his heels? And how hot and fiery muſt that hell be, which is inflamed and blown up by ſo long impenitence and abuſe of patience?

DIRECT. III. *Wonder at the patience of God, in ſparing ſuch hell-deſerving ſinners as you are; and be thankful for it.*

HATH a long-ſuffering God preſerved the thread of your life, when it was almoſt ſnapt aſunder by the violence of ſickneſs? Hath he freed you from racking pains under which you were groaning? Nay, ſaved you from the grave and hell into which you were falling? And, have you not cauſe of wondering and thankſgiving? To move you to it, conſider theſe few things.

1*ſt*, How miſerable had you been through all eternity, if your ſickneſs had carried you off to another world in your ſins? You had been howling with damned ſpirits, under endleſs and ceaſeleſs torments, and for ever cut off from theſe hopes and offers of mercy now you have. Then the maſter of the houſe would have the door ſo barred againſt you, as it could never have been opened again to you, knock as you would. Luke xiii. 25.

2*dly*, Conſider how heavily you had burdened his patience with your heinous ſins, and frequent relapſes thereunto; and that after convictions, calls, and various rods ſent to reclaim you: ſo that he was put to ſay, as in Amos ii. 13. "Behold I am preſſed under you, as a cart is preſſed that is full of ſheaves." He was overburdened with your ſins, ſo that the axle-tree of patience was ready to break, and let you fall into hell; and yet, behold, he bears with you ſtill.

3*dly*, Conſider how ſoon he could have eaſed himſelf of the load, and ſhaken you off into the pit of deſtruction. In a moment could he have done it, and yet he bears many years with your ſins that are ſo grievous to him. Yea, it is with a ſort of reluctancy that he eaſes himſelf of ſinners, after he gets the utmoſt provocation, Iſa. i. 24. "Ah! I will eaſe me of my adverſaries."

4*thly*, How ready is he to turn away his anger, and reprieve ſinners from deſtruction, when in their diſtreſs they make but a ſhew of repentance and turning unto God! as we ſee, Pſal. lxxviii. 36. 38. He, like a tender-hearted prince, calls back the warrant for their execution after it was gone forth.

5*thly*, Conſider how much many Chriſtleſs ſinners are beholden to Jeſus Chriſt for ſparing mercy. He is repreſented by the dreſſer, Luke xiii. interceding that the fruitleſs fig-tree might be ſpared and tried ſome time longer, after orders given to cut it down. Were it not for Jeſus Chriſt, O ſinner, however much you forget and ſlight him, you had ſurely been in hell long ere now. How oft doth he obtain another year, and after that another, for the unfruitful ſinner, and unthankful abuſers of divine patience!

6*thly*, Conſider how ſparing mercy hath diſtinguiſhed you from many others, who lived not ſo long, nor ſinned ſo much as you have done. God hath wounded the hairy ſcalp of many, and taken them away in their youth; when he hath continued you to manhood, and perhaps to old age: though your ſins and ill-deſervings be greater than theſe of many, on whom he hath long ſince taken vengeance, God hath left many alſo toſſing and groaning on beds of pain, when he hath eaſed and raiſed you up. O then, return like the thankful leper, and magnify the God of your health. Hath God diſtinguiſhed you from others by his goodneſs? It becomes you to diſtinguiſh yourſelves from others by your thankfulneſs. O that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs; undeſerved and diſtinguiſhed goodneſs!

To move you to this, let me ſet the example of Hezekiah before you, Iſa. xxxviii. and there ſee how thankfully and affectionately he remembered

the Lord's mercies in recovering and delivering him from the bitter affliction he had been under. "I ſaid, I am deprived of the reſidue of my years; I ſhall behold man no more, with the inhabitants of the world. Like a crane or ſwallow, ſo did I chatter; I did mourn as a dove. Behold, for peace I had great bitterneſs; but thou haſt in love to my ſoul delivered it from the pit of corruption. The living ſhall praiſe thee, as I do this day." Yea, he was ſo overcome with a ſenſe of the Lord's patience and mercy towards him, that he is at a loſs how to expreſs it, ver. 15. "What ſhall I ſay? He hath both ſpoken unto me, and himſelf hath done it." Let all who are recovered from ſickneſs, ſtudy to imitate that good king in holy admiration and thankfulneſs to the God of their life.

DIRECT. IV. *Study to improve the ſparing-mercy and goodneſs of God to you, in a right and ſuitable manner.*

O Sinner, hath God brought you back from the gates of death and brink of hell, reſtored to health, and given you a new offer of mercy and ſalvation through Chriſt, in a preached goſpel, which you formerly deſpiſed? Strive now to improve the Lord's patient and kind dealings towards you with the utmoſt care, and abuſe his patience no longer. And in order thereto, take the following counſels.

I. Be deeply humbled for your former obſtinacy and impenitency, notwithſtanding of God's gracious and patient dealing. O let the ſparing-mercy and goodneſs of God toward thee, lead thee to repentance, which is the native deſign of it, according to Rom. ii. 4. "Deſpiſeſt thou the riches of his goodneſs, forbearance and long-ſuffering? Not knowing, that the goodneſs of God leadeth

thee to repentance." As if he had ſaid, Doſt thou not ſee, O man, the kind providence of God, in ſparing and recovering thee from ſickneſs, taking thee by the hand, and pointing out to thee to go to thy cloſet to mourn and weep for all thy by-paſt ſins, and particularly for thy miſpending the time of health, and abuſing of the Lord's patience? The conſideration of David's goodneſs and forbearance towards Saul, melted Saul's heart, for as hard and rugged as it was; and made him to lift up his voice and weep, and ſay to David, 1 Sam. xxiv. 7, &c. "Thou art more righteous than I; for thou haſt rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou haſt ſhewed this day, how that thou haſt dealt well with me; foraſmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedſt me not. For (ſays he) if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?" Oh! far more reaſon haſt thou, O man, to weep and cry, God hath found me his enemy, yea, in my enmity and ſins fighting againſt himſelf; he laid me on a ſick-bed, and on the very brink of hell, and the leaſt touch of his hand would have thruſt me in; but yet he hath ſpared his enemy and let me go well away. Oh! will not theſe cords of love draw me, and this matchleſs goodneſs invite and hire me to repent? Can any conſideration in the world be more powerful than this, to melt my hard heart into tears of holy ſhame and ſorrow for my ſtiff-neckedneſs and rebellion againſt a gracious and long-ſuffering God? Away with theſe curſed, God-provoking ſins of mine! Down with theſe weapons of rebellion! Let me never lift them more againſt ſuch a merciful Sovereign!

II. Zealouſly improve the time which God, in his long-ſuffering hath lengthened out to you, in working out the ſalvation of thy ſoul. Have

you ſo long been loading the patience of God with your ſins? Have you many a day been grieving his holy Spirit, by trifling away your time, ſlighting his motions, and venturing on ſins againſt light? O then, beware of burdening his patience any more; but diligently hearken to every motion of God's Spirit and of your own conſcience for the time to come. You have much work to do, and but little time to do it in; therefore lay hold on every opportunity for carrying it on. The conſideration of the much time you have already loſt and miſpent, ſhould make you the more diligent in what remaineth. How much of it have you loſt in youth? How much in ignorance? how much in negligence? how much in worldlineſs? how much in paſtimes? how much in idle words? how much in actual ſins and provocations againſt God? And now it may be near the evening of your day. And will you not ſpend the evening (which God is mercifully lengthening out) with extraordinary care and diligence? If a traveller loſe the beginning of the day, he muſt travel the faſter in the evening, otherwiſe he may fall ſhort of his journey, and have his lodging to ſeek when night comes on. Paul had miſpent much time in the beginning of his life; and this conſideration, when his eyes were opened, did ſtir him up to be more diligent in the ſervice of God, ſo that he was more zealous than any of the reſt of the apoſtles. O man, follow his example, and trifle no longer in the work of God. Art thou not convinced thou haſt ſquandered away enough of this precious treaſure of time already? And wilt thou alſo miſpend and throw away the little that remains? O be not ſo fooliſh.

III. Be careful to raze all falſe foundations, and build your hopes of ſalvation upon the only ſure rock, Jeſus Chriſt. Let it not diſcourage thee to dig to the foundation, that ſo much of thy day

is loſt: for it is better to do it late than never. Remember how miſerable is the condition of that houſe which is built upon the ſand, Mat. vii. 27. For when the flood comes, and the ſtorm ariſeth and beats upon it, great and diſmal will the fall of that houſe be. Do not build your hopes of heaven upon God's abſolute mercy, upon your convictions, upon your freedom from groſs ſins, upon your prayers or tears, upon your morality and juſt dealings with men; though theſe be neceſſary and excellent in themſelves, yet they are falſe foundations for you to build the hopes of your juſtification and ſalvation upon, ſeeing they are wholly inſufficient to bear ſuch a weight. However much theſe things have been eſteemed and valued by you formerly, in the matter of juſtification; yet if you reſolve to be a wiſe builder, you will now let them all go, yea, count them all but loſs and dung that you may win Chriſt, our only hope, build on him alone, and be found in him, not having on your own righteouſneſs, which is but filthy rags.

Well then, raze and tear up every falſe foundation; dig deep, till ye win to the rock Chriſt. Dig deep into the holy law and nature of God; dig till you ſee the infinite ſtrictneſs of divine juſtice, the unſpeakable evil that is in ſin, the hidden vileneſs and abominations of the heart, your own inability to do any thing for your help and relief. Did yet further, till you ſee the infinite fulneſs and freeneſs of God's grace in Jeſus Chriſt, that ſuitable remedy, that anſwers all a poor ſinner needs. Dig deep, and dig ſtill on, till you win to this rock; let your cry be ſtill to God, "Lord, lead me to the rock Chriſt, and his all-ſufficient righteouſneſs, only." Act faith upon this rock, rely on it, build all your hopes on it, and ſay, "This is my reſt for ever, here

will I dwell, for I have deſired it." Lord, the deſire of my ſoul is only to Chriſt, and to the remembrance of his name. "His name is as ſweet ointment poured forth; therefore do the virgins love him."

IV. If you would rightly improve the ſparing mercy and goodneſs of God, let it lead you to repentance and reformation of life. Turn from all theſe ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion, now in the day of health, which conſcience challenged you for in the time of ſickneſs. Mind Chriſt's caution and warning to healed ſinners, John v. 14. "Behold thou art made whole; ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing befal thee." O let ſin die with thy ſickneſs; and do not relapſe into thy former ſecurity and ſinful ways. Beware of returning with the dog to thy vomit, and like the ſow that is waſhed to the wallowing again in the mire of thy former ſins and uncleanneſs; leſt being intangled and overcome again with the filthineſs which thou now haſt eſcaped, thy latter end will prove worſe than thy beginning.

Laſtly, And to ſum up all I ſhall ſay in this chapter, Be careful to redeem time, and active in providing for an eternal ſtate. O prize and value the mercy of health and ſtrength more than ever. Sympathize with theſe who are ſtill lying on ſick-beds, and under languiſhing diſtempers; neglect not to pity and pray for them. Remember the diſtreſſed caſe you were in yourſelves, when you had no reſt in your bones, when weariſome nights were appointed to you, and you were full of toſſings to the dawning of the day. Conſider how ſlippery is your ſtanding. Though the late ſtorm of trouble be over, yet the clouds will return after rain.

CHAP. VII.

Containing directions to theſe ſick perſons who are apparently in a dying condition, and drawing near to another world.

I Have already, in the firſt, third and fourth chapters, given ſeveral directions concerning our ſubmiſſion to the will of God, making preparation for death, calling for miniſters, edifying others by our diſcourſe, ſettling our worldly affairs, &c. which are very proper for dying perſons; and therefore I ſhall not repeat them, but proceed to ſpeak of other things. Only let me add this word, If you have hitherto neglected to make your wills, ſettle your worldly affairs, ſend for miniſters to diſcourſe with and pray over you; delay it no longer, but do it ſpeedily, while you have the uſe of your reaſon and underſtanding. And what I have more to ſay, take it in the following directions.

DIRECT. I. *Conſider when death ſtares you in the face, that now is the time, if ever, to exert the utmoſt activity in preparing to meet with it.*

ALAS, it is to be regreted that the moſt part of men neglect their ſouls, miſpend their life, miſimprove their health, and leave undone the work for which they were created, preſerved, and enjoyed the goſpel. Surely a near proſpect of death and judgment cannot but be uneaſy to ſuch perſons. What a melancholy thought muſt it be for a dying man? Oh! I had all my time given me to make preparation for an endleſs eternity; and alas, I never minded it till now, that I muſt leave the ſtage of this world. Is there any hope for ſuch a careleſs and miſerable ſinner? I acknowledge the caſe is ſad, but yet it is not remedileſs nor deſperate; ſeeing there is a ſacrifice pro-

vided for your ſins, and there is an all-ſufficient Saviour in your offer, who never did caſt out any humbled ſoul that came to him for mercy. You have great reaſon indeed to abhor and condemn yourſelf before God for your ſin and folly; yet deſpair not, but believe, whatever be your ſins, your dangers, your fears and temptations, that Jeſus Chriſt is both able and willing to ſave to the uttermoſt all that come to God by him, and that his grace aboundeth more than your ſin aboundeth. O how glad would devils and damned ſouls in hell be, if they were but in your caſe, and had your offers and hopes! How diligently would they improve the time of mercy? O be perſuaded then to ſpend the little time that now remains with the utmoſt care, in making penitent confeſſion of ſin to God, and applying the blood of Chriſt for pardon. Nay, even the beſt of God's people have need to be diligent at this time in making actual preparation for dying. God is now ſaying to you, as Joſhua did to the Iſraelites, Joſh. i. 11. "Prepare you victuals, for within three days ye ſhall paſs over this Jordan, to go in to poſſeſs the land which the Lord your God giveth you." Lay in proviſions for your paſſing over this Jordan of death: you know not how rough the paſſage may be.

I ſhall give ſome motives to preſs this diligent and active preparation; and therefore conſider,

1*ſt*, The ſhort time of your life that remains is all the time you have for working out your ſalvation. What you do for attaining heaven, or avoiding hell, muſt be done now, or never; for there is no work nor device in the grave, whether thou goeſt, nor is there any coming back to this world, to amend what hath been done amiſs.—Dying is a thing you cannot get a trial of, it is what you can only do once and no more, Heb. ix. 27.

2*dly*, Be diligent now, for as ſoon as death gets commiſſion to cut you off, it will execute it; it will not ſpare you, nor allow you one minute more time to prepare for eternity. The moſt mercileſs enemies have ſometimes been overcome by the prayers and tears of ſuch as on their knees did beg a little more time to prepare for another world, and have hearkened to their requeſts; but this enemy death, will not grant one moment's reſpite.

3*dly*, Conſider, that your eternal ſtate and condition will be according to the ſtate in which you die. Death will open the doors either of heaven or hell to you, in one of which you ſhall take up your eternal abode. As the tree falls at death, ſo will it lie through eternity.

4*thly*, Conſider, what a ſerious and awful matter it is to die, and go into another world; for then you will have immediately to do with God, your judge; there will be no vail then betwixt him and your ſoul. You will then enter into a world of ſpirits, wherewith you are ſo little acquainted. You are frighted now to go into a room alone, that is ſaid to be haunted by a ſpirit; how frightful then muſt the caſe of thoſe be, who are hurried into a world of ſpirits, not knowing but devils muſt be their companions for ever. Surely then it is your intereſt to give all diligence now, to make your acquaintance with the Lord of that world, before you enter into it.

5*thly*, Put forth thy utmoſt activity for thy ſoul now; for, to be ſure, Satan will put forth his utmoſt againſt it. If thou be in a Chriſtleſs ſtate at this time, he will uſe all his efforts and ſtratagems to keep thee from Chriſt; either by flattering thee that thy ſtate is good, thereby to lull you aſleep in ſin and ſecurity, or by telling thee, it is out of time to help matters with thee, thereby to drive you into deſpair. The devil will leave no

method unattempted to ruin thy ſoul, when death is near, for he knows his time is ſhort; and, if he catch not the ſoul then, he will never get it: and neither can he hurt it hereafter; for, if once it enter heaven, he can trouble it no more.

If thou art a believer in Chriſt, Satan, thy malicious enemy, will not fail to attack thee, at this time, with all his might; for though he may know he cannot keep thee out of heaven, yet he will labour to render thy paſſage towards it, as dark, tempeſtuous and uncomfortable as poſſibly he can. But it is the believer's happineſs, this cruel enemy is under a ſtrong chain, and cannot do all he would; for Jeſus Chriſt is the good ſhepherd, that hath undertaken for all his ſheep. Nevertheleſs, by his wiſe permiſſion, this adverſary may ſometimes give great diſturbance to a dying ſaint; which calls thee to the greateſt diligence and watchfulneſs at this time. It is the obſervation of one, that as the devil is moſt buſy at the concluſion of a duty, as of prayer, that the Chriſtian may be moſt diſturbed and diſtracted, when he is to cloſe up all in the name of Chriſt, and ſo all his deſires be fruſtrated; ſo he is moſt buſy in the concluſion of our days, and when death is at hand, ſeeking by temptations, diſtractions, and falſe imaginations, to do us all the miſchief he can; and all becauſe he knoweth his time is ſhort; according to that word in Rev. xii. 12. "The devil is come down, having great wrath, becauſe he knoweth that he hath but a ſhort time." He may fitly be called the wolf of the evening, mentioned in Jer. v. 6. in regard he comes forth moſt fiercely in the evening of men's lives, to ſet upon their precious ſouls. Yea, ſo buſy is he, ſometimes, with believers, under dangerous ſickneſs, ſeeking to overthrow their faith and aſſurance, that it is the obſervation of a good man, that he ſeldom ſeeth a ſick ſaint followed cloſe with temptati-

ons, recover of that ſickneſs; for Satan, knowing he hath but a little time, proves as uneaſy to him as he can. Hence that great man of God, Mr. Knox, ſaid, when he came to die, "In my life-time the devil tempted me to deſpair, caſting my ſins in my teeth; but now, in my ſickneſs, he tells me, I have been faithful in the miniſtry, and ſo have merited heaven: but bleſſed be God, who brought thoſe texts into my mind, "Not I, but the grace of God in me. What haſt thou that thou haſt not received?" The children of Iſrael had never ſuch hot work from their enemies, as when they juſt came to enter into the promiſed land. What need then haſt thou, O believer, to be diligent in thy preparations on a dying bed, to quicken grace, put forth thy utmoſt ſtrength, bring all the aſſiſtance thou canſt from the Captain of thy ſalvation, when thou haſt ſuch a cruel enemy to encounter with! Now is the time for action, though yet it will be your wiſdom to leave as little to be done at this time as poſſible.

DIRECT. II. *Continue to the laſt in the exerciſe of true repentance and humiliation for ſin.*

POſſidonius, who wrote the life of Auguſtine, ſaid, that he heard him often ſay, in his health, that repentance was the fitteſt diſpoſition both for dying Chriſtians and miniſters; and, for himſelf, that he died with tears in his eyes, weeping for ſin. When death approacheth neareſt, we ſhould thus ſtir up ourſelves to give ſin the moſt deadly blow of any we have given it all our life. As it is moſt laudable to die forgiving ſinners that have wronged us, ſo alſo taking revenge upon ſin, that hath injured a gracious God. The apoſtle tells us, 2 Cor. vii. 11. that indignation and revenge attend true repentance. Wherefore, as Samuel took vengeance on Agag a little before his death; and Moſes,

at God's cammand, avenged the children of Iſrael of the Midianites juſt before he was gathered to his people, Numb. xxxi. 2. and dying Samſon gave the moſt fatal blow to the Philiſtines, of any he had given them before; ſo a dying Chriſtian ſhould take the ſevereſt revenge on ſin at laſt, which hath ſo oft, through his life, diſhonoured God, pierced Chriſt, and grieved his holy Spirit. It is the laſt opportunity you will have to ſhew your indignation at it, and therefore do it effectually.

Again, conſider it is old ſins unmourned for, that many times keeps believers ſo much in the dark, when they come to die. Theſe do raiſe many thick clouds about their evening ſun, and hinder them from going off the ſtage with ſuch comfortable aſſurance of God's love as otherwiſe they might attain to. Theſe did very much hinder Job's peace and ſettlement in the day of affliction, as he complains, Job xiii. 26. "He makes me to poſſeſs the iniquities of my youth." It is a ſad thing, when young ſins and old bones meet together. O that young people would mind this in time! You are doing that now, which will abide with you to age, if not to eternity. Sin muſt be bitter ſome time or other, for God calls it a root that bears gall and wormwood, Deut. xxix. 18. Iſrael could not have peace nor ſucceſs while there was an Achan in the camp; ſo neither can you have conſolation or aſſurance, while any ſin lies unreckoned for in the conſcience. Make a thorough ſearch then into old ſins, and mourn over them. We find Paul frequently calling over the ſins of his life, and even theſe he was guilty of before converſion; "I was injurious, a blaſphemer," &c. whereby he obtained much inward peace and conſolation. Be oft looking back to old ſins, with inward ſorrow and faith in Chriſt's blood, if you would have a death-bed eaſy and ſoft to you.

DIRECT. III. *Be mindful of all acts of justice and charity which may be incumbent upon you at this time.*

IT is great wisdom in men to settle their worldly affairs in time of health; that so their minds may be free for spiritual exercises, and not disturbed with earthly cares and business when they come to a dying-bed; but if this hath been neglected hitherto, it must not be omitted now. I have given directions about it, *Chap.* I. *Direct.* VI. so that I shall say little here. Only be careful to do justice to every man, as much as in you lieth; and particularly, 1. By making a just and rational provision for your wife and children. 2. By ordering the payment of all your just debts, without defrauding any of your lawful creditors. 3. By making restitution, in case you have wronged any man. If justice be not done in these matters, how can your souls be disburdened of guilt?

In the next place, forget not the acts of charity, which God requires of all the professors of the gospel.

1st, Seek reconciliation with your neighbours, where any difference or mistakes have fallen out; that so you may die in peace and charity with all about you.

2dly, Be ready, from the heart, to forgive these that have done you any wrong. If the natural sun should not go down upon our wrath, much less should the sun of our lives. If you carry an unforgiving spirit with you into another world, how can you expect to meet with a forgiving God there, when he hath expressly declared, Matth. vi. 15. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." O then imitate your glorious Saviour, and his martyr Stephen, who at their death begged mercy from

God, for those that mortally hated them, Luke xxiii. 34. Acts vi. 60.

3*dly*, If the Lord hath given you substance, honour the Lord with it, by leaving some part of it to the poor, and to pious uses. I have pressed this once and again before; but I mention it frequently, because it is much forgotten by dying persons in our age. Remember, it is not left arbitrary to you to give or not as you please; no, for God doth charge it upon you as a duty, yea, a debt that you owe to him, 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18. "Charge them that are rich in this world—that they do good, be rich in good works, ready to distribute." And he pronounceth them blessed who consider the poor, Psal. xli. 1. I grant, that people are not to leave all their works of charity to a death-bed; these should also be minded in our lifetime, so as to make our own hands our executors, and our own eyes the overseers of our charitable projects: but surely it is a proper season for shewing charity to God's poor, when we are leaving them, and cannot have occasion for shewing it more. Remember what is recorded of Dorcas after her death, Acts ix. 36. that she was a woman full of good works and alms-deeds. And her friends, ver. 39. shewed the effects of her charity to Peter after her death. All which is written for our example and admonition, that we may be rich in such good works, that our friends may have them to shew after our death. Surely it is a sign of the degeneracy of the age, and that religion is on the declining hand, when people generally fall so short of the zeal and piety of their fathers in these matters.

4*thly*, It would be a commendable work of charity in dying persons, to be giving many good counsels to their relations and children, and to be putting up many fervent prayers to God for them.

So Chriſt, when near to death, commited his ſpiritual children to his Father, and earneſtly begged his protection and care of them, John xvii. 11. "I am no more in the world, but theſe are in the world; keep them through thy name, keep them from the evil, &c. In like manner, cry to God for your children, "Lord, thou haſt graciouſly given them to me, I now reſtore them back to thee. They were born to me once, O that they may be born to thee a ſecond time! I am leaving them in the midſt of ſnares and temptations, O that it may be their happineſs to be the preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus! Keep them by thy power through faith unto ſalvation. O take them within the bond of thy covenant, and be thou their Father, to protect, direct and provide for them. Give them a name in thy houſe better than of ſons and daughters, that I may meet with them at thy right hand, with everlaſting joy."

Laſtly, Be ſuitably concerned alſo for the whole church of Chriſt, and eſpecially for theſe that are in affliction, that God may looſe their bonds, ſend them liberty and proſperity in his due time. "Do good in thy good pleaſure unto Zion, build up the walls of thy Jeruſalem. Peace be within her walls, and proſperity within her palaces."

DIRECT. IV. *Labour what you can to overcome the love of life, and fears of death; that you may attain to willingneſs to die and leave the world, when God calleth you to it.*

IT is no wonder that a wicked man, or one that hath no intereſt in Chriſt, be unwilling to die: Why? He is affrighted with the guilt of paſt ſins, and the fears of future torments; and it is impoſſible to be rid of theſe till he become a true believer in Chriſt. No man hath ground to welcome

death but the believer; yet it is to be regretted, that ſo many of them ſhould appear unwilling to leave this world, which is nothing to them but a wilderneſs and weary land. Lot's ſoul was vexed and troubled in Sodom, and yet he was loath to leave it; ſo ſome believers, when called to leave a vexing world, do ſhew much hankering towards it, and would linger behind. This proceeds partly from nature, which dreads a diſſolution, and partly from the weakneſs of grace. But O let all God's children labour to overcome this averſion, and go forth to meet death half-way, and bid it welcome. And, for their help in this matter, I ſhall lay before them the following arguments.

1ſt, Conſider how little reaſon a believer hath to be much in love with this preſent life. 1. It is a ſinful life; ſin dwells in your nature, breaks out in your life, and pollutes all your duties. How oft have you groaned under this burden; and ſhould you not be glad to be eternally delivered from it? 2. It is a life of diſeaſes and infirmities; and ſhould you not be willing to be cured of them all at once? 3. It is a life of temptations, Satan is ſtill harraſſing thee; and ſhould you not be deſirous to be out of his reach? 4. It is a life of perſecutions from the wicked; they hate, reproach and injure you many ways. And is it not deſirable to be, "where the wicked ceaſe from troubling, and where the weary be at reſt?" 5. It is a life of clouds and darkneſs; your ſun is often vailed, and your evidences obſcured, which occaſions many bitter complaints. And ſhould you not deſire that time, when the day ſhall break, and all ſhadows flee away? 6. It is a life of calamities and fears; it is like a ſtormy ſea, where one wave rolls upon the back of another; and when one calamity is paſt, we many times fear a greater is coming; and ſometimes the heavens turn ſo black and gloomy, that we fear a hurricane

of judgments is ready to blow. And, ſhould you not bleſs God when he comes by death to houſe your ſouls, and ſet you out of harm's way! It is in mercy that God takes away the righteous from the evil to come, Iſa. lvii. 1. So dealt he with Joſiah, 2 Kings xxii. 20. "I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou ſhalt be put into thy grave in peace, and thine eyes ſhall not ſee all the evil which I ſhall bring on this place." So it is obſervable, that Methuſelah died the very year before the flood; Auguſtine a little before the ſacking of Hippo; Pareus juſt before the taking of Heidelberg. Luther obſerves, that all the apoſtles died before the deſtruction of Jeruſalem. And Luther himſelf died before the bloody wars broke out in Germany. Thus God frequently hides his people from the temptations and troubles that are coming on the earth. Why? He ſees many of them not in caſe to endure them; and therefore he, in mercy, takes them away from a tempting and ſinning world, to a land of holineſs and reſt. While we are here, we live in a world that lies in wickedneſs; every ſenſe of the body betrays the ſoul into ſin: the poor ſoul can ſcarce look out at the eye and not be infected, nor hear by the ear and not be diſtracted, nor ſmell at the noſtrils and not be tainted, nor taſte by the tongue and not be allured, nor touch by the hand and not be defiled.

O believer, what is this life that thou art ſo fond of? It is but a living death, or a dying life. It is full of grief for things paſt, full of labour for things preſent, and full of fears for things future. The firſt part of our life is ſpent in folly, the middle part is overwhelmed with cares, and the latter part of it is burdened with infirmities and age. And, what gain we by the prolonging of this life? Nothing but to do more evil, ſee more evil, and ſuffer

more evil. And, ſhould a Chriſtian be unwilling to be rid of thoſe grievances?

2*dly*, Conſider, that dying is appointed as the way, and the only way, to glory; there is no way to enter the promiſed land, but by croſſing the Jordan of death. And ſhould not a ſtranger deſire to be at home with his friends, though he hath a rough way and ſtormy ſea to paſs? Is there any home like heaven, where your incomparible friend Chriſt is? O what a happineſs is it to be with Chriſt, and to ſee him as he is! How happy do you think Peter, James and John were in being taken up to mount Tabor, to be eye-witneſſes of their Saviour's transfiguration. But, O believer, death procures a greater happineſs to you; it uſhers you to mount Zion, where you ſhall not only ſee your Saviour whiter than the ſnow, and brighter than the ſun, but yourſelf transfigured with him, made like him, and eternally ſecured of his preſence. The three apoſtles ſaw but two prophets; but you ſhall ſee all the prophets, all the apoſtles, all the patriarchs, all the martyrs, all the holy perſons you once converſed with on earth, and, in general, all the ſaints in heaven, each of them ſhining as the ſun: and, how ſweet will their company be? O how ſoon will the trifles of the world evaniſh, and all its pleaſures be forgot, when once the believer gets a view of that captivating glory above! When the ſhepherds heard but ſome few notes of the angels ſongs, who praiſed God at the nativity of our Saviour, they preſently left their flocks and ran to Bethlehem, to behold the child Jeſus lying in the manger; but much more cauſe hath a believer to leave all the pleaſures of the world, and run to behold an exalted Jeſus ſitting on the throne of his glory, with all his ſaints and angels ſinging praiſes around him.

If Cato and Cleombrotus, two heathens, after reading Plato's book of the immortality of the ſoul,

did voluntarily, the one fall on his ſword, the other break his neck from a precipice, that they might the ſooner come, as they fancied, to partake of theſe joys; what a ſhame is it for Chriſtians, who have a far ſurer and clearer diſcovery of theſe things from God's own book, to be found unwilling to enter into theſe heavenly joys, when their bleſſed Redeemer calls for them thither?

3*dly*, Conſider how willing Chriſt was to come from heaven to earth for you: and, ſhould you be unwilling to remove from earth to heaven for him; yea, for yourſelves, for the gain is yours? O did Chriſt aſſume your nature, become obedient unto death, and purchaſe an inheritance for you with his blood? And will you be backward to go and take poſſeſſion of it? O for a Chriſt-like obedience at death.

Laſtly, Conſider what a reproach is caſt on Chriſtianity by a believer's being unwilling to die. For Chriſtians to pray and ſpeak much of Chriſt, of heaven and glory, and yet be unwilling to enter into that glory; what is it but a miſbelieving of God, and a tempting of ſtrangers to think there is no reality in religion?

Queſt. Since death is not eaſy to grapple with, how ſhall I attain to this bleſſed diſpoſition, a willingneſs to die?

Anſw. 1. Be frequently putting forth the acts of faith upon the righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and believe that Chriſt died to bring in a perfect righteouſneſs for believers, that they all might be complete in him. Now, why ſhould a believer be afraid to appear before God in Chriſt's righteouſneſs, which is ſo pleaſing and acceptable to him? Rev. xiv. 4, 5. They are ſaid to be without fault before the throne of God. If a believer were to appear before God in his own righteouſneſs, cloathed with his own duties and performances, it would

be dreadful to think of dying; but to have the white garment of an elder brother to put on, gives another view of death. Alas! it is our neglecting the daily exercise of faith in the righteousness of Christ, that makes the thoughts of death so unwelcome.

2*dly*, When you attain to peace and reconciliation with God, labour to preserve it. Be stating and clearing counts with God every day, and watch against these sins that wound conscience, waste comfort, and grieve the Spirit of adoption. When we think God is displeased with us, we will be afraid of going to him.

3*dly*, Study to be more denied to the enjoyments of this life, and to use them with a holy indifferency; otherwise there will be an unwillingness to leave these things.

4*thly*, Labour to be deeply sensible of the burden of indwelling sin and corruption, and the workings thereof in your hearts; and this will make the thoughts of death welcome, because it eternally delivers you from it.

5*thly*, Seek further discoveries of the loveliness of Christ, and the daily exercise and increase of your soul's love to him; for it is the nature of love to long after communion with the person we love.

6*thly*, Make death familiar to you, by the frequent forethoughts of it. Retire oft from the world to think of dying, when you are in best health.

7*thly*, Be much taken up in the sweet employment of praising God, and exalting the worthy Lamb that was slain; and this will incline you to be there, where this is the continual work.

Lastly, Be oft thinking of these warnings and fore-runners of death, which God sends to wean your heart from the love of life, and dispose you to a willingness to die. For this end, God sends manifold diseases, pains, infirmities, wants, straits, losses, crosses, disappoints, &c. And, in a special

manner, let old people view the forerunners and harbingers of death, which God ſends to prepare his way; ſuch as the decays and infirmities of old age, which we have elegantly deſcribed in figurative expreſſions, Eccl. xii. 2. "Then the light of the ſun, moon and ſtars ſhall be darkened:" *i. e.* In old perſons, the intellectual powers and faculties, which are as lights in the ſoul, ſhall be weakened. "And then do the clouds return after rain:" *i. e.* Their diſtempers are, frequently, like a continual dropping in a very rainy day; and the ending of one is but the beginning of another.—Ver. 3. "Then the keepers of the houſe do tremble:" *i. e.* The head and hands, which were employed for the preſervation of the body, do ſhake. "The ſtrong men bow themſelves:" *i. e.* The legs and thighs, which are the pillars of the houſe, become weak and feeble. "The grinders ceaſe, becauſe they are few:" *i. e.* The teeth, which, like the upper and nether milſtone, do grind our meat, and prepare it for concoction, then ceaſe to do their part. "Thoſe that look out of the windows are darkened:" *i. e.* The eyes wax dim, whereby God calls us to turn them away from beholding vanity, and to look after the things that are not ſeen. Ver. 4. "The daughters of muſic are brought low:" *i. e.* They have neither voice nor ears; they can neither ſing themſelves, nor take pleaſure in the voice of ſinging men or ſinging women. Then death pulls us, as it were, by the ear, to think on the muſic above. Ver. 5. "The almond-tree flouriſheth:" *i. e.* The hair grows white, like an almond-tree in the bloſſom. And as the outward parts of the body do weaken and decay, ſo alſo do the inward parts: therefore it is ſaid, ver. 6. "Or ever the ſilver cord ſhall be looſed, the golden bowl broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the ciſtern:" *i. e.* The ſilver cord of the ſinews is

loosed, which carries the faculty of sense and motion from the head through the body. The head, which, like a golden bowl or box, contains the brain, that is the fountain of sense and motion, through age is broken, and turns crazy. The many pitchers of the veins, which carry the nourishing blood from the well of the liver unto each part of the body, become like broken vessels. And the wheels of the arteries, which convey the vital spirits from the heart to the several members for quickening them, begin to turn faint and languid. All these things do warn old persons to take their affections off time's things, and set them upon things above, that they may be helped to say, "We desire to depart, and to be with Christ."

But, after all, some believers will have objections against willingness to die, some whereof I shall consider.

Object. I. I am threatened to be cut off in the flower of mine age.

Ans. Instead of fretting on this account, you ought rather to adore and praise a gracious God, that is willing to bestow the reward of the whole day upon thee, who hast only laboured some hours of it. Praise him that is willing to take you so soon home; whereby you will prevent much sin and sorrow in the world.

Object. II. I have houses and lands, and a comfortable dwelling on the earth.

Ans. These are only needful in your passage through the world; above there is no use for these comforts. There God provideth mansions for his people, a thousand times more comfortable, John xiv. 2. 2 Cor. v. 1. Surely houses of God's building, and of Christ's furnishing, are preferable to the cottages built by men's hands.

Object. III. But I am loath to leave God's ordi-

nances, and the ſweet communion I have had with him therein.

Anſ. Above there will be no need of ordinances, ſacraments, bibles or miniſters; for the Lamb will be the light of the heavenly temple, and all hid things in religion will be diſcovered in Chriſt's face. There you will celebrate an eternal Sabbath, drink the fruit of the vine new with Chriſt, be ever with the Lord, without any cloud or interruption of your communion with him. Is it any loſs to be taken from the ſhallow ſtreams, and ſet by the fountain that is ever full and running over?

Object. IV. "I am loath to leave the company of godly friends and relations.

Anſ. Death will take you to your friend Chriſt, that is far better than them all. And for one friend you loſe upon earth, you ſhall find an hundred in heaven; and theſe godly relations you leave here, you ſhall ſoon meet with them again there, where you will have far ſweeter communion than poſſibly you can have upon earth with them, or the beſt of men, who, while here, have ſeveral infirmities and paſſions, that many times make their converſe uncomfortable.

Object. V. But I would fain ſee the glory of Zion upon earth, when God's promiſes to her ſhall be accompliſhed.

Anſ. So Moſes would fain have ſeen Iſrael's happineſs in the promiſed land: but his dying in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promiſes to them there, was more acceptable to God than his beholding the performance. And the glory of the church-militant is a ſight nothing comparable to that of the church-triumphant above.

Object. VI. But I would incline to ſtay to do God more ſervice in his church below, whoſe neceſſities are claiment.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, You will not want opportunity for

ſerving and glorifying God above. and where you will be in far better caſe for it. Here our hearts are oft out of tune for God's work, and we are forced to hang our harps upon the willows; but above there are no willows to hang them on; no ſaint there will ever complain of any indiſpoſition of heart or tongue.

2*dly*, God knows the neceſſities of his church, and is more concerned for them than thou canſt be; and it is eaſy for him to raiſe up inſtruments to carry on his works when thou art gone.

Object. VII. I am afraid of the pain and pangs of death. The thoughts of theſe make me ſhrink back.

Anſ. 1*ſt*, Many die without much ſeeming ſenſe of pain, and it is probable have leſs pain at the hour of death, than they have felt under ſeveral former diſeaſes.

2*dly*, If they be ſharp they are ſoon over; and each pang of death will ſet ſin a ſtep nearer the door, and thy ſoul a ſtep nearer home; and therefore it becometh a Chriſtian to die cheerfully, and to be glad when he can find the grave.

Now, what I have ſaid in this chapter, is to the believing ſoul; for it is no wonder though the ſouls of the ungodly, at death, ſhrink back into the body, and tremble to go forth, when they can have no proſpect of any better lodging than utter darkneſs.

DIRECT. V. *Study to imitate the ancient worthies, by dying in faith.*

THIS was the character and epitaph of the Old Teſtament ſaints, Heb. xi. 13. "Theſe all died in faith." As they had lived by faith, ſo they died in faith. They not only continued true believers to the laſt, dying in the ſtate of faith, but they died in the exerciſe of faith alſo. Now, the exerciſe of faith in dying, includes ſeveral things

worthy to be imitated by all dying believers.

1*ſt*, An open and profeſſed adherence to the doctrine of faith and truths of Chriſtianity. This faith all Chriſtians ſhould zealouſly own in the view of death, and perſevere in to the laſt without wavering. This would be to die like martyrs, though we die in our beds. How ſtedfaſtly did old Polycarp adhere to Chriſt and his truths to the laſt, and ſo died in faith? When he was urged by the Proconſul to deny Chriſt, he anſwered, "Theſe fourſcore and ſix years have I ſerved him, and he never once offended me; and how ſhall I now deny him?"

2*dly*, Dying in faith imports an inward, hearty and firm belief of the fundamental articles of the Chriſtian faith; and improving them ſo, as to make them the foundation of our comfort and hope at the hour of death. As, for inſtance, we muſt yield our departing ſouls in the firm belief of their living and exiſting in a ſeparate condition after this life, and of that future ſtate of bleſſedneſs and reſt which God hath prepared for all believers. Again, we muſt diſmiſs the body to the grave, in a firm belief and hope of a joyful reſurrection at the laſt day. Thus that holy man Job both lived and died in faith, Job xix. 25, 26. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my ſkin, worms deſtroy this body, yet, in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God." A Chriſtian then dies in faith, when he believes theſe truths ſo, as cheerfully to obey God's call, and venture into the inviſible world, upon the teſtimony which God hath given concerning it; as Abraham did in going to an unknown land, Heb. xi. 8. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he ſhould after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

3*dly*, The believer dies in faith, when he makes

freſh application to Chriſt, as his only hope and Saviour; takes him in his arms of faith, as old Simeon did before his death, ſaying, "In the Lord Chriſt I have righteouſneſs and ſtrength: though I have neither righteouſneſs nor ſtrength in myſelf, yet I have both in him, my bleſſed Surety and Redeemer." We have many uſes for faith in Chriſt at the hour of death. By faith we muſt depend on Chriſt's blood, for making atonement and waſhing away the guilt of all our bypaſt ſins. By faith we muſt put on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, for covering our naked ſouls, when they are to appear and ſtand before God. By faith we muſt rely on Chriſt, for ſtrength to ſuffer pain, reſiſt temptations, and conquer death and all our enemies. By faith, we muſt look to Chriſt as our leader, and truſt him for ſafe conduct through the dark valley of death, and for our ſafe landing on the ſhore of glory.

4*thly*, The believer dies in faith, when he truſts his departing ſoul with confidence in his Redeemer's hand, ſaying, with Paul, 2 Tim. i. 12. "I know whom I have believed, and am perſuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him againſt that day." This was the Pſalmiſt's practice, Pſal. xxxi. 5. "Into thy hand I commit my ſpirit; for thou haſt redeemed me, O Lord God of truth." So the man who dies in faith, commits the jewel of his ſoul to his Redeemer's keeping, and confides in his care of it. Why? He made it, he hath redeemed it, he loves it, it is his own, a member of his body, and he will not hate his own fleſh. He loves his dying ſaints much better than we love an eye, a hand, or any other member of our body, which, to be ſure, we will not loſe, if it be in our power to ſave it.

5*thly*, Dying in faith imports, that the dying ſaint confides in God's faithfulneſs and truth for making good all his promiſes to his church and

people after his death, which are not yet accompliſhed. We ſhould go off the ſtage in the firm belief of God's fulfilling all his promiſes concerning the proſperity of his church, the calling of the Jews, the deſtruction of Antichriſt, and the ſecond coming of our Lord; and likewiſe concerning our families, that God will be as good as his word, and be a father to the fatherleſs, and a huſband to the widow. Would we then be ſo happy as to die in faith, let us take theſe advices:

1*ſt*, Let us be careful to get faith before-hand; for death is a time to uſe faith, not to get it. They were fooliſh virgins, who had their oil to buy when the bridegroom was come.

2*dly*, Study to live every day in the exerciſe of faith, and be ſtill improving and making uſe of Chriſt in all his offices, and for all theſe ends and uſes for which God hath given him to believers.

3*dly*, Be frequently clearing up your evidences for heaven, and beware of letting ſin blot them to you.

4*thly*, Record and lay up the experiences of God's kind dealings with you; and be often reflecting upon them, that you may have them ready at hand in the hour of death.

Laſtly, Meditate much on theſe promiſes which have been ſweet and comfortable to you in the time of ſtraits; and beg that the Lord may bring them to your remembrance when you come to die.

DIRECT. VI. *Set the Examples of other dying Saints before you, and ſtudy in like manner to ſhine in Grace, and be exemplary in Piety and heavenly Diſcourſe, for the glory of God, and good of Souls, when you are going off the ſtage.*

THIS is the laſt opportunity you have of doing ſervice to God, and the intereſt of religion; wherefore, ſtrive to improve it diligently for the

honour of God, and the edification of thoſe that ſurvive you. How pleaſant is it to ſee God's people leaving the world, commending Chriſt and his ſervice, and perfuming the place where they lie in with their laſt breath? I have, Chap. III. Direct. V. and VI. adduced ſeveral motives to preſs this point, and given directions concerning the ſpeech and behaviour of the children of God, when on ſick-beds, which I ſhall not repeat. That which I deſign here is, to ſet before you the examples of ſome eminent ſaints, and their exemplary pious and holy ſpeeches and ſayings, when they were a-dying; and that, in order to confirm and eſtabliſh others in religion, and alſo to excite them to imitate theſe ſhining worthies, when they alſo come to die. Surely it is for this very end that God hath ordered us to be compaſſed about with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, Heb. xii. 1. Thus doth the apoſtle improve their example, Heb. xi. 1. And how earneſt is he in this matter? Heb. vi. 11, 12. "And we deſire that every one of you do ſhow the ſame diligence, to the full aſſurance of hope unto the end; that ye be not ſlothful, but followers of them who, through faith and patience, inherit the promiſes."

I ſhall begin with ſome examples from the ſacred hiſtory; and, in the firſt place, with the King of ſaints, our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. O how ſweet and comfortable were his diſcourſes unto his diſciples, when his death drew nigh! And what a heavenly prayer did he make for them and all his elect ones at that time! Theſe we have recorded in the xiv. xv. xvi. and xvii. chapters of John; which are moſt ſeaſonable at all times for us to read and meditate upon, but eſpecially when death is approaching. And, likewiſe, let us read the hiſtory of our Lord's paſſion, in which we may obſerve the wonderful expreſſions of his faith in

God, his patience under ſufferings, his pity to his enemies, his love to his mother and his diſciples, his concern for his Father's glory, his obedience in his death, and his willingneſs to be offered up. Thus the bleſſed Sun of Righteouſneſs did ſhine forth moſt gloriouſly at his ſetting, with the radiant beams of his heavenly graces and virtues: and herein he hath ſet himſelf a pattern to all dying ſaints to the end of the world.

Jacob, when he was on his death-bed, called his ſons together, and gave them many ſpecial charges and bleſſings; we have his excellent words recorded in Gen. xlvii. and xlix. chapters. And, in particular, how ſweetly doth he ſpeak of the coming of the Meſſiah to them? Gen. xlix. 10. 18.; And how affectionately doth he commend God's goodneſs and kind providence towards him through his life? Gen. xlviii. 15, 16. "The God which fed me all my life long unto this day," &c.

Joſeph, when he was a-dying, ſpoke lovingly to his brethren, who had dealt cruelly with him; and aſſured them of the Lord's faithfulneſs, in keeping his promiſe to their fathers, Gen. l. 20. "I die, and God will ſurely viſit you, and bring you out of this land."

Moſes, when he was to go up to mount Nebo, to die there, left many bleſſings, and gave many weighty charges to the children of Iſrael. We have his holy and raviſhing words recorded, Deut. xxxii. and xxxiii. chapters. And, particularly, how pleaſantly doth he commend God and his ways to the people! Deut. xxxii. 4. "He is the rock, his work is perfect; for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he."

Joſhua, when he was near his end, gave many ſolemn charges and exhortations to the people, which we have narrated, Joſh. xxiii. and xxiv. chapters. And there we may ſee the remarkable methods he takes to rivet impreſſions and convic-

tions upon them, now when he can inſtruct them no longer. And, particularly, he appeals to their conſciences concerning the faithfulneſs of God in keeping his word to them, that ſo he might engage them to fidelity to him, Joſh. xxiii. 14. "And behold this day I am going the way of all the earth, and you know in all your hearts, and in all your ſouls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God ſpake concerning you."

David, when his end was near, aſſembled the people, and ſolemnly charged them, as in the audience of God, to keep his commandments, 1 Chron. xxviii. 8, 9. And, particularly, he charged his ſon and ſucceſſor Solomon, to "Know the God of his father, and to ſerve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind."

The apoſtle Paul, when taking his laſt farewell of the elders of Epheſus, moſt ſolemnly charges them, "To take heed to themſelves, and the flocks over which the Holy Ghoſt had made them overſeers," Acts xx. 28. And how ſweetly doth he ſing in the view of approaching death, 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. "I am now ready to be offered, the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finiſhed my courſe, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the Lord, the righteous judge ſhall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto them alſo that love his appearing."

In imitation of theſe ſcripture ſaints, the people of God, in all ages, have ſtudied to glorify God, and edify men at their death, by commending God and godlineſs to their friends and families. Theſe we ought to teach by our example, both how to live and how to die, as others have done before us. Thus ſaid once a dying ſaint to his family, "I have formerly taught you how to live, and now I teach you how to die."

Now, becauſe in all ages the ſpeeches of dying Chriſtians have been much obſerved, that God hath remarkably bleſſed them to the eſtabliſhment and confirmation, quickening and exciting, of others to imitate them; I ſhall bring ſeveral examples from human hiſtories and writings, and moſtly from Clark's Lives, of ſundry eminent ſaints, whoſe graces have ſhone brighteſt, and their ſpeeches were moſt heavenly, when the ſun of their life was at the ſetting.

1. That old diſciple, Polycarp, when he came to the ſtake at which he was burnt, deſired to ſtand untied, ſaying, "Let me alone; for he that gave me ſtrength to come to the fire, will give me patience to endure the flame without your tying."

2. So holy Cyprian triumphed over death, ſaying, "Let him only fear death, who muſt paſs from this death to the ſecond death." When he heard the ſentence of death pronounced againſt him, he ſaid, "I thank God for freeing me from the priſon of this body."

3. Baſil, when the emperor Valens ſent his officers to tempt him with great preferments to turn from the faith, he rejected them with ſcorn, ſaying, "You may offer theſe things to children." And when they threatened him with ſufferings, he ſaid, "Threaten your purple gallants with theſe things, that give themſelves to their pleaſures."

When Modeſtus the Prefect threatened Baſil to confiſcate his goods, to torment him, or baniſh him, or kill him, he anſwered, "He need not fear confiſcation that hath nothing to loſe; nor baniſhment, to whom heaven only is a country; nor torments, when his body would be daſhed with one blow; nor death, which is the only way to ſet him at liberty." The Prefect telling him he was mad, he ſaid, *Opto me æternum ſic delirare*, "I wiſh I may for ever be thus mad."

4. Ignatius being led from Syria to Rome, to be torn in pieces of wild beasts, he expressed his fear lest it should happen to him as to some others, that the lions, out of a kind of reverence, would not dare to touch him. And therefore he often wished, "That their appetites might be whetted to dispatch him. For (said he) the lions teeth are but like a mill, which, though it bruiseth, yet wasteth not the good wheat, only prepares and fits it to be made pure bread. Let me be broken by them, so I may be made pure manchent for heaven."

5. The great Mr. Knox, our reformer, when he lay a-dying, was much in prayer, ever crying, "Come, Lord Jesus; sweet Jesus, into thy hands I commend my spirit." Being asked, by those that attended him, if his pain was great? He answered, "That he did not esteem that a pain, which would be to him the end of all trouble, and the beginning of eternal joys." Oft-times, after some deep meditations, he said, "O serve the Lord in fear, and death shall not be terrible to you: blessed is the death of those that have part in the death of Jesus."

After a sore temptation from Satan (which I formerly mentioned) over which he triumphed at length, he said, "Now the enemy has gone away ashamed, and shall no more return. I am sure now my battle is at an end, and that without pain of body, or trouble of spirit, I shall shortly change this mortal and miserable life, with that happy and immortal life; which shall never have an end." After one had prayed for him, he was asked whether he heard the prayer? He answered, "Would to God you had heard it with such an ear and heart as I have done!" Adding, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." With which words, without any emotion of hands or feet, as one falling asleep, rather than dying, he ended his life.

6. Dr. Gouge, when he was old and dying, was

ſore afflicted with the ſtone, and other painful maladies; yet though, by reaſon of his pains, he was often heard to groan, he never once grumbled againſt the diſpenſations of God: He never cried out, *A great ſufferer*, but often, *A great ſinner*: Yet ſtill comforted himſelf, that there is a great Saviour. In his greateſt torments he would ſay, "Well, yet in in all theſe there is nothing of hell, or of God's wrath. O my ſoul, be ſilent, be patient; it is thy God and Father that thus orders thine eſtate. Thou art his clay; he may tread and trample upon thee as he pleaſeth, thou haſt deſerved much more. It is enough that thou art kept out of hell, though thy pains be grievous, yet they are not intolerable, thy God affords ſome intermiſſions; he will turn it to thy good, and at length put an end to all: and none of theſe comforts can be expected in hell." In his greateſt pains, he often uſed holy Job's words, "Shall we receive good from the hands of the Lord, and not evil alſo?" When any of his friends would have comforted him, with telling him of his eminent gifts and ſervice in the miniſtry, he would anſwer, "I dare not think of any ſuch thing for comfort: Only Jeſus Chriſt, and what he hath done and endured, is the ground of my ſure comfort." The thoughts of death were pleaſant to him, which he often termed his beſt friend, next unto Jeſus Chriſt. And he would bleſs God, that he had nothing to do, but to die.

7. I have read of another miniſter under the like extreme pains, when he was aſked how he did, his frequent anſwer was, "The buſh is always burning, but not conſumed! though my pains are above the ſtrength of nature, yet they are not above the ſupports of grace." He would pray, "Lord, drop comfort into theſe bitter waters of Marah. Let the blood of ſprinkling, which extinguiſheth the fire of thine anger, allay my burn-

ing pain. Oh, if my patience were more, my pains would be leſs! Lord, give me patience, and inflict what thou wilt. This is a fiery chariot, but it will carry me to heaven! O my God! break open the priſon-door, and ſet my poor captive ſoul free: I deſire to be diſſolved, but enable me willingly to wait thy time." He would cry again, "When ſhall the time come, that I ſhall neither ſin more, nor ſorrow more; Lord, keep me from diſhonouring thy name by impatience. Oh, who would not, even in burnings, have honourable thoughts of God! Lord, thou giveſt me no occaſion to have hard thoughts of thee. Bleſſed be God, for the peace of mine inward man, when my outward man is ſo full of trouble. This is a bitter cup, but it is of my Father's mixing, and ſhall I not drink it?"

8. Mrs. Jane Aſkew, who was a martyr in king Henry's reign, to her confeſſion in Newgate ſhe thus ſubſcribed; "Written by me Jane Aſkew, that neither wiſheth death nor feareth its might, and as merry as one bound towards heaven." When the Chancellor ſent her letters at the ſtake, offering her the king's pardon, if ſhe would recant; ſhe, refuſing to look upon them, gave this anſwer, "I came not here to deny my Lord and Maſter."

9. Mr. James Bainham, when he was at the ſtake, in the midſt of the burning fire, which had half-conſumed his legs and arms, ſpake theſe words: "O ye Papiſts! behold ye look for miracles, and here now ye may ſee a miracle; for in this fire I feel no more pain than if I were on a bed of down; it is to me as a bed of roſes."

10. John Lambert, as he was burning in Smithfield, and his legs were quite conſumed with the fire, he lift up his hands, his fingers flaming like torches, but his heart abounding with comfort, crying out, *None but Chriſt! None but Chriſt!*

11. Mr. Robert Glover, a little before his death,

had loſt the ſenſe of God's favour, for which he was in great heavineſs and ſorrow; but when he came within ſight of the ſtake at which he was to ſuffer, he was on a ſudden ſo filled with divine comfort, that, clapping his hands together, he cried out to his ſervant, *He is come! He is come!* and ſo died moſt cheerfully.

12. It was a ſaying of Auguſtine, "Boughs fall off trees, and ſtones out of buildings; and why ſhould it ſeem ſtrange that mortal men die!"

13. Mr. John Dod had ſo violent a fever, that there was but little hope of his life; yet at length his phyſician coming to him ſaid, "Now I have hope of your recovery." To whom Mr. Dod anſwered, "You think to comfort me with this, but you make my heart ſad. It is as if you ſhould tell one, who had been ſore weather-beaten at ſea, and conceiving he was now arrived at the haven where his ſoul longed to be, that he muſt go back again to be toſſed with new winds and waves."

He would often ſay in his laſt ſickneſs, "I am not afraid to look death in the face. I can ſay, Death, where is thy ſting? Death cannot hurt me."

He uſed to ſay, "The knowledge of two things would make one willing to die, *viz.* What heaven is, and that it is mine." "Yes," ſaid one, "if a "Truly aſſurance is to be had; and, what have we been doing all this while?"
man were ſure of that." To whom he anſwered,

Some others of the ſayings of this holy man are ſo pithy and remarkable, I cannot paſs them here.

Once Mr. Dod coming to viſit a godly miniſter on his death-bed, who was much oppreſſed with melancholy, and complained to him, ſaying, "O Mr. Dod, what will you ſay of him, who is going out of the world, and can find no comfort?" To whom Mr. Dod anſwered, "What will you ſay of our Saviour Chriſt, who, when he was going out

of the world, found no comfort, but cried out, "My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?" He ſaid of afflictions, "They are God's potions, which we may ſweeten by faith and faithful prayers: but we, for the moſt part, make them bitter, putting into God's cup the evil ingredients of our impatience and unbelief. He called death the friend of grace, though it be the enemy of nature; for, whereas the word, ſacraments and prayer do but weaken ſin, death kills it. He uſed to ſay, "A man is never in a hard condition, unleſs he have a hard heart and cannot pray." He inſtructed Chriſtians how they ſhould never have a great nor laſting affliction, and that was, by looking upon the things that are not ſeen, which are eternal, 2 Cor. iv. 17, 18. For, what can be great to him, that counts his life but a ſpan long? When he ſaw a Chriſtian look ſad, he would ſay, as Jonadab did to Amnon, "Art thou a king's ſon, and looketſt ſo ill?" And when ſuch complained to him of their croſſes and loſſes, he would uſe the words of Eliphaz to Job, "Do the conſolations of God ſeem ſmall unto you? God hath taken from you your children, your goods, &c. but he hath not taken from you himſelf, his Chriſt, nor his Spirit, nor heaven, nor eternal life."

To a friend of his, that roſe from a mean to a great eſtate, he ſent word, "That this was but as if he ſhould go out of a boat into a barge or ſhip; but he ought ſeriouſly to remember, that, whilſt he was in this world, he was but upon the floating ſea."

He often ſaid, that if it were lawful to envy any, he would envy thoſe that turn to God in their youth, whereby they eſcape much ſin and ſorrow, and are like Jacob, that ſtole the bleſſing betimes. He uſed to compare reproofs given in paſſion, to ſcalding potions, which the patient could not let down; in reproofs we ſhould labour for meekneſs and wiſdom, uſing ſoft words, and hard arguments.

He was a moſt popular miniſter, but much perſecuted. Once he took a journey to ſee his father-in-law, Mr. Greenham, and to bemoan himſelf to him, upon account of his croſſes and hard uſage. Mr. Greenham, having heard all he could ſay, anſwered him thus: "Son, ſon, when affliction lieth heavy, ſin lieth light." Mr. Dod uſed often to bleſs God for this ſpeech, ſaying, If Mr. Greenham had bemoaned him as he expected, he had done him much hurt. He forgot not this ſaying in his old age, but made excellent uſe of it for himſelf and others.

14. Oecolampadius, that famous divine of Switzerland, when lying on his death-bed, and being aſked, Whether the light did not offend him? He anſwered, pointing to his breaſt, *Hic ſat lucis*, Here is abundance of light! Meaning of comfort and joy. He aſked one of his friends, What news? His friend anſwered, None. 'Then, ſaid he, I will tell you ſome news; I ſhall preſently be with my Lord Chriſt.'

15. A certain godly man, paſſing through his laſt ſickneſs with extraordinary calmneſs of conſcience, being aſked by ſome of his friends anent it, he anſwered, that he had ſtedfaſtly fixed his heart upon the ſweet promiſe, Iſa. xxvi. 3. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whoſe mind is ſtayed on thee, becauſe he truſteth in thee." And my God, ſaith he, hath graciouſly made it fully good unto my ſoul.

16. Mr. Robert Bolton, miniſter at Broughton, well known by his writings, in time of his laſt ſickneſs, which was long and ſharp, often breathed out theſe words: "O when will that good hour come? When ſhall I be diſſolved? When ſhall I be with Chriſt?" Being told, that to be diſſolved was indeed better for him, yet it would be better for the church that he would ſtay here. He anſwered, "If I have found favour in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and ſhew me both it and his habitation; but, if otherwiſe, lo, here I am, let him do

what ſeemeth good in his eyes." Being aſked by another, if he would not be content to live, if it pleaſed God? He anſwered, "I grant that life is a great bleſſing of God, neither will I neglect any means that may preſerve it; and do heartily ſubmit to God's will; but of the two, I infinitely deſire more to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt." He bade all that came to ſee him, make ſure of Chriſt before they came to die, and look upon the world now as a lump of vanity. He encouraged the miniſters that came to him, to be diligent and courageous in the work of the Lord, and not to faint nor droop for any affliction that ſhould ariſe thereupon.

When he found himſelf very weak, he called for his wife and children. He deſired her to bear his diſſolution, which was now at hand, with a Chriſtian fortitude; a thing he had been preparing her for by the ſpace of twenty years; and bade her make no doubt but ſhe ſhould meet him again in heaven. He exhorted his children to remember theſe things he had frequently told them before; adding, that he hoped and believed, that none of them durſt think to meet him at the great tribunal in an unregenerate ſtate.

Some of his pariſh coming to watch with him, it was moved, that as, by his doctrine, he had diſcovered to them the exceeding comforts that were in Chriſt, ſo he would now tell them what he felt in his own ſoul. 'Alas, ſaid he, do ye look for that of me now, that wants breath and ſtrength to ſpeak? I have told you enough in my miniſtry; but yet, to ſatisfy you, I am by the wonderful mercies of God, as full of comfort as my heart can hold; and I feel nothing in my ſoul but Chriſt, with whom I heartily deſire to be.' And, obſerving ſome weeping, he looked to them, and ſaid, O, what a deal ado there is before one can die!

When the pangs of death were upon him, being

told that ſome of his dear friends were about him, to take their laſt farewell, he cauſed himſelf to be raiſed up in his bed; and, after a few gaſpings for breath, he ſaid, 'I am now drawing on apace to my diſſolution; hold out, faith and patience, your work will ſpeedily be at an end.' And then, ſhaking them all by the hands, prayed heartily and particularly for them; and deſired them to make ſure of heaven, and to bear in mind what he had formerly told them in his miniſtry; proteſting to them, that the doctrine he had preached to them for the ſpace of twenty years, was the truth of God. as he ſhould anſwer it at the tribunal of Chriſt, before whom he ſhould ſhortly appear.

When he was ſtruggling with death, a very dear friend taking him by the hand, aſked him, if he felt not much pain? 'Truly no, ſaid he; the greateſt I feel is your cold hand.'

17. Mr. John Holland, a godly miniſter, continued his uſual practice of expounding the ſcripture in his family to the laſt; and, the day before his death, he called for the Bible, and cauſing another to read the eight chapter of the Romans, he diſcourſed upon it verſe by verſe; but on a ſudden he ſaid, 'O ſtay your reading; what brightneſs is this I ſee! Have you lighted up any candles?' A ſtander-by ſaid, no, it is the ſun-ſhine (for it was about five o'clock in a clear ſummer's evening) 'Sunſhine! ſaid he, nay, it is my Saviour's ſhine. Now farewell world, welcome heaven! the day-ſtar from on high hath viſited my heart! O ſpeak it when I am gone, and preach it at my funeral, God dealeth familiarly with man! I feel his mercy! I ſee his majeſty! whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth! but I ſee things that are unutterable.' And in this rapture he continued till he died.

18. I knew, not long ago, an eminently godly

man, *G. M.* that fell into ſeveral ſuch extraordinary raptures ſometime before his death, ſuch as his bodily ſtrength and ſpirit were not able to ſupport under, though he had no ſickneſs. Sometimes he was ſo ſwallowed up and overcome by the manifeſtations of God's love to his ſoul, that his words could not be well underſtood; his natural colour, heat and ſtrength would ſo go off, that all about him would conclude him to be dying; but, when he was able to get words uttered, they were ſo heavenly and raviſhing, concerning the love of Chriſt, and freedom of grace, that by-ſtanders could not hear him without weeping. Sometimes miniſters, when they came to viſit him, and found him in theſe raptures, were forced to turn all their prayers in his behalf into praiſes; except ſome petitions they would put up to God, 'That he might graciouſly ſpare and be tender of his weak body, and enable him to bear that load of loving-kindneſs God was pleaſed to let out to him, and which his preſent bodily ſtrength was not ſufficient for.' Yea, they would be put to cry, 'Lord, if it be thy will, hold thy hand, for he is but a clay-veſſel; this new wine will burſt the old bottle: preſerve him in life, as a monument of the rich grace of God, for the conviction of atheiſts and carnal people, and for the confirmation of the faith of the children of God.' Sometimes he would cry in abrupt expreſſions, 'O angels, help me to praiſe him! O ſaints, admire his love, and wonder at him!'—Again, 'O flames of love! My ſoul ſeeth Chriſt! the heavens open! I ſee a throne, and the Lamb in the midſt of the throne! O what think ye of Chriſt? My ſoul breathes, breathes toward him! My ſpirit is exhaled out of me by the manifeſtations of God!' He uſed frequently to ſay, with a heavenly air, to his friends, 'O what think ye of Chriſt?'—When his eſtaſy did ſomewhat abate, ſo that he attained a

pleaſant calmneſs of thought, and freedom of ſpeech, he would diſcourſe of the myſteries of religion, the electing love of God, the freedom of grace, the unſearchable riches of Chriſt, and the glorious contrivance of redemption through his death and ſacrifice; I ſay, he would talk of theſe things more like an angel than a man! For ſuch was his heavenly eloquence, fluency of words, and facility of ſpeaking upon theſe ſubjects (which otherwiſe was not natural to him) that theſe who came to ſee him were exceedingly ſurpriſed and aſtoniſhed to hear him. His body gradually weakened under theſe raptures of ſpirit, and he longed much to be off the world, becauſe he thought he could be ſo little uſeful in it for advancing God's honour. He reckoned himſelf bound to improve the ſhort time he was like to have here, in commending Chriſt and religion to all that he had acceſs to, and alſo to admoniſh them of any thing he knew amiſs in them, which he did moſt convincingly. And having occaſion to ſee ſome who vilipended the eſtabliſhed church, and the ordinances diſpenſed in it; he highly commended the ordinances, and told them, that, from his own ſweet experience he could ſay, that God was to be found in them. He ſeemed to have ſin wonderfully mortified: for he complained of no other heart-plague but ſelf, and it was his great exerciſe to get ſelf wholly ſubdued: he purſued it through many of its windings and lurking places, and after all he would regret his little ſucceſs againſt it; 'For, ſaith he, when I am in my moſt elevated frames, and admitted to the neareſt acceſs to my Redeemer, that ſubtile enemy ſelf, will enter in with me, and offers to pull the crown off his head before my face.'

Once after hearing a ſermon on Pſalm lxxx. 8. "I will hear what God the Lord will ſpeak;" he broke out in a rapturous diſcourſe to one that

came to ſee him, bleſſing God, that had ſpoke to him in that ſermon. 'And O, ſaid he, what am I, that the rock of Iſrael ſhould have ſpoken to me theſe three ſermon-days by-gone, aſſuring me that all my ſins are forgiven? What am I, a vile worm, that he ſhould be ſo kind and condeſcending, as to diſcover Chriſt and heaven in ſuch a manner to me, and aſſure me that I will ſhortly be with him? Oh, I thought that I had ſinned him away from me, but I ſee he will not bide away! O admirable free grace! O help me to praiſe him!

When death drew near, there was ſome alteration in his caſe; yet he never queſtioned his intereſt in Chriſt, but ſtill aſſerted, 'I know he is my God and my Redeemer, and I ſhall ſhortly be with him.' And once, when he was ready to complain for want of God's wonted manifeſtations, he ſaid, 'The Lord knew his body was now weak, and could not bear what formerly he had met with; but, ſaid he, glory to his name, he hath given me three blinks ſince my laſt illneſs began.'

19. Dr. Harris, head of Trinity-college in Oxford, in his laſt ſickneſs, uſed to exhort all about him to get faith above all things. 'It is, ſaid he, your victory, your peace, your life, your crown, and your chiefeſt piece of ſpiritual armour. Howbeit, get on all other pieces, and go forth in the Lord's might; ſtand to the fight, and the iſſue ſhall be glorious. Only forget not to call in the help of your General: do all from him, and under him.' On the Lord's day he would not have any kept from the ordinances on his account; and, when they returned from the ſermons, he would ſay to them, 'Come, what have ye for me?' And, when any gave him account of what they had heard, he would reſume the heads thereof, and ſay, 'O what excellent truths are theſe! Lay them up carefully, for you will have need of them.' When friends

came to viſit him, he would ſay, I cannot ſpeak, but I can hear. Being aſked, where his comfort lay? He anſwered, In Chriſt, and in the free grace of God.

One telling him that he might take much comfort in his labours and the good he had done; his anſwer was' 'All is nothing without a Saviour: without him, my beſt works would condemn me. O, I am aſhamed of them, they are ſo mixed with ſin; I have done nothing for God as I ought. O, loſs of time ſits very heavy upon my ſpirit! work, work apace; aſſure yourſelves, nothing will more trouble you when you come to die, than that you have done no more for God, who has done ſo much for you.'

Sometimes he uſed thus to breathe out himſelf, 'I never, in all my life, ſaw the worth of Chriſt, nor taſted the ſweetneſs of God's love in that meaſure as now I do.' Being aſked by miniſters, what they ſhould chiefly requeſt for him? He anſwered, 'Do not only pray for me, but praiſe God that he ſupports me, and keeps off Satan from me in my weakneſs: beg that I may hold out; I am now a great way home, near the ſhore, I leave you toſſing on the ſea: Oh, it is a good time to die in!'

In all the latter-wills which he made, he took care this legacy ſhould ſtill be inſerted; *Item*, I bequeath to all my children, and to their children's children, to each of them a Bible, with this inſcription, NONE BUT CHRIST. He uſed to ſay, 'It is a hard thing for a ſaint to forgive himſelf ſome faults, when God hath forgiven them.'

20. David Chitræus, when he lay a-dying, lifted up his head from the pillow to hear the diſcourſes of his friends that ſat by him, and ſaid, 'That he ſhould die with the greateſt comfort, if he might die learning ſomething.'

21. Mr. Cooper, when a-dying, ſaid, 'I ſaw not my children when they were in the womb,

yet there the Lord fed them without my care or knowledge: I ſhall not ſee them when I go out of the body, yet they ſhall not want a father.'—Again, 'Death is ſomewhat dreary, and the ſtreams of that Jordan between us and our Canaan run furiouſly, but they ſtand ſtill when the ark comes.'

22. The reverend Mr. Halyburton, that ſhining light in St. Andrews, when a-dying, commended Chriſt and godlineſs with great earneſtneſs to all that came to ſee him. He exhorted his brethren to diligence in the miniſtry. 'It was the delight of my heart, ſaid he, to preach the goſpel; I deſired to decreaſe, that the bridegroom might increaſe, and to be nothing that he might be all. I repent I did not more for him. O that I had the tongues of men and angels, to praiſe him.' When he was adviſed to lie quiet, he ſaid, 'Whereon ſhould a man beſtow his laſt breath, but in commending the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God cloathed in our nature, dying for our ſins?'

He cauſed to read one of Mr. Rutherford's Letters, *viz.* that to Mr. John Mein, and thereafter ſaid, 'That is a book I would recommend to you all; there is more practical religion in that letter, than in a book of a larger volume.'

He exhorted ſome miniſters that came to ſee him to faithfulneſs. 'As for the work of the miniſtry, ſaid he, it was my deliberate choice: were my days lengthened out much longer, and days as troubleſome as they are like to be, I would rather be a condemned miniſter of God, than the greateſt prince on earth."—He ſaid, when taking farewell of his wife, children and ſervants, 'Here is a demonſtration of the reality of religion, that I, a poor, weak, timorous man, as much afraid of death as any, am now enabled, by the power of grace, compoſedly and with joy, to look death in the face: I dare look it in the face, in its moſt ghaſtly ſhape, and hope, within a little, to have the victory. I can-

not but commend the Lord Jeſus. As far as my word will go, I muſt proclaim it, he is the beſt Maſter that ever I ſaw.'—To his ſon, who was a child, he ſaid, 'If I had as many ſons as there are hairs on your head, I would beſtow them all on God.'—To ſome preſent he ſaid, 'O ſirs, I dread mightily that a rational ſort of religion is coming in among us; I mean by it, a religion that conſiſts in a bare attendance on outward duties and ordinances, without the power of godlineſs; and thence people ſhall fall into a way of ſerving God, which is mere Deiſm, having no relation to Chriſt Jeſus and the Spirit of God.'—He expreſſed his fears of a ſtorm coming on the church of Scotland; but he ſaid, the day would break, and the Lord would ariſe, and he hoped the church would be made a wonder, and the Lord will ſay, "Lo! this people have I formed for myſelf." "He can make a nation to be born at once."—He cried often with the ſpouſe in the Song, "When ſhall the day break, and the ſhadows flee away? Turn, my beloved, and be thou as a roe or a young kart on the mountains of Bether."—He ſaid, 'Shall I forget Zion? Nay, let my right hand forget her cunning, if I prefer not Jeruſalem to my chiefeſt joy. O to have God returning to this church, and his work going on in the world! If every drop of my blood, every bit of my body, every hair of my head, were all men, they ſhould all go to the fire to have this going on.'—He ſaid, 'If I would ſay that I would ſpeak no more in the name of the Lord, it would be like a fire within me.—I am calling you to ſee a miracle, God is melting me down into corruption and duſt, and yet he is keeping me in a calm. I would not believe that I would have borne, and borne cheerfully, this rod ſo long: this is a miracle, Pain without pain! And this is not the fancy of a man diſordered in his brain, but of one lying in full compoſure. O bleſt be God, that ever I was born!

I have a father, mother, and ten brethren and ſiſters in heaven, and I ſhall be the eleventh. I ſhall ſhortly be at that glory I have been long expecting: tho' I come not near Mr. Shield's glory, nor Mr. Anderſon's, yet I will be well enough if I win in. Worthy is the Lamb to receive glory.'

23. Mr. Hugh Makail, in his ſpeech before his death, ſaid, 'I have eſteemed the ſolemn engagements of this nation to the Lord's pregnant performance of that promiſe, Iſa. xliv. 5. where it is evident, that where church-reformations come to any maturity, they arrive at this degree of ſaying, "I am the Lord's, and ſubſcribing with the hand unto the Lord." So was it in the days of the reforming kings of Judah; and after the reſtoration from the captivity of Babylon in the days of Nehemiah. This ſame promiſe did the Lord Jeſus make Yea and Amen to us, when he redeemed us from ſpiritual Babylon.—I glorify him that he hath called me forth to ſuffer for his name and ordinances, and the ſolemn engagements of the land to him. Hereafter I will not talk with fleſh and blood, nor think on the world's conſolation. — Farewell all my friends, whoſe company hath been refreſhing to me in my pilgrimage.—I have done with the light of the ſun and moon. Welcome eternal life, everlaſting love, everlaſting praiſe, everlaſting glory. Praiſe to him that ſits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.'

24. The famous Mr. Durham being viſited by a miniſter in his laſt ſickneſs, which was long and lingering, who ſaid to him, 'Sir, I hope you have ſo ſet all in order, that you have nothing elſe to do but die.'—'I bleſs God, ſaid Mr. Durham, I have not had that to do neither theſe many years.'

25. Mr. Rowland Nevat, his dying prayer for his children was, That the Mediator's bleſſing might be the portion of every one of them. Ad-

ding to them, 'I charge you all, ſee to it, that you meet me on the right-hand of Chriſt at the great day.' When he was ſometimes much ſpent with his labours, he would appeal to God, that though he might be wearied in his ſervice, he would never be weary of it. Being oft diſtempered in his body, he would ſay, he was never better than in the pulpit, that it was the beſt place he could wiſh to die in.

26. Mr. Philip Henry, when a dying, his pains were very ſharp; he ſaid to his neighbours, who came in to ſee him, 'O make ſure work for your ſouls, by getting an intereſt in Chriſt, while you are in health; for, if I had that work to do now, what would come of me? A little before his laſt illneſs he wrote to a reverend brother, 'Methinks it is ſtrange, that it ſhould be your lot and mine to abide ſo long on earth by the ſtuff, when ſo many of our friends are dividing the ſpoil above; but God will have it ſo; and to be willing to live in obedience to his holy will, is as true an act of grace, as to be willing to die when he calls.'—One aſking him how he did, he anſwered, 'He found the chips fly off apace, the tree would be down ſhortly.'—He was ſometimes taken with fainting fits, which when he recovered from, he would ſay, 'Dying is but a little more.' Once he ſaid, after a little recovery, 'Well, I thought I had been putting into the harbour, but I find I muſt yet to ſea again.'

27. Mr. Matthew Henry, his death was ſomewhat ſudden, he ſaid a little before it to ſome about him, 'You have been uſed to take notice of the ſayings of dying men, this is mine, That a life ſpent in the ſervice of God and communion with him, is the moſt comfortable and pleaſant life, that any one can live in this world.'

28. Holy and learned Mr. Rutherford, a little before his death, left a written teſtimony to our covenanted work of reformation; and therein he

proves the warrantableneſs of nations entering into covenant with God under the New Teſtament times, and ſhews that this practice is the accompliſhment of ſeveral Old Teſtament propheſies, ſuch as Jer. l. 4, 5. Iſa. ii. 3. Zech. viii. 2. Iſa. xix. 23, 24, 25. which relate to goſpel-times. And when he was dying, he ſent ſeveral meſſages to the Preſbytery of St. Andrew's, deſiring them to adhere to God's cauſe and covenant.—In his ſickneſs, he oft broke out in ſacred raptures, extolling and commending the Lord Jeſus, whom he often called his bleſſed Maſter, his kingly King.—When his death drew near, he ſaid, 'I ſhall ſhine, I ſhall ſee him as he is, I ſhall ſee him reign, and all his fair company with him: and I ſhall have my large ſhare: my eyes ſhall ſee my Redeemer, theſe very eyes of mine, and no other for me.' When exhorting one to be diligent in ſeeking God, he ſaid, 'It is no eaſy thing to be a Chriſtian; but, for me, I have gotten the victory, and Chriſt is holding out both his arms to embrace me.'—He was wonderfully ſtrengthened againſt the fears of ſuffering and of death; 'For, ſaid he, I ſaid to the Lord, if he would ſlay me five thouſand times, I would truſt in him; and I ſpoke with much trembling, fearing I ſhould not make my putt good. But as really as ever he ſpoke to me by his Spirit, he witneſſed unto my heart, that his grace ſhould be ſufficient for me.'— He ſaid to ſome miniſters that came to ſee him, 'My Lord and Maſter is the chief of ten thouſand of thouſands! none is comparable to him in heaven or in earth! Dear brethren, do all for him; pray for Chriſt, preach for Chriſt, feed the flock committed to your charge for Chriſt, viſit and catechiſe for Chriſt; do all for Chriſt, and beware of man pleaſing. Feed the flock out of love, the chief Shepherd will appear ſhortly.'— Once, when he recovered from a fainting fit, he ſaid, 'I feel, I feel, I believe, I enjoy, I rejoice, I feed on manna.'

As he took a little wine in a ſpoon, Mr. Robert Blair ſaid to him, 'You feed on the dainties of heaven, and think nothing of our cordials on earth.' He anſwered, 'They are all but dung, yet they are Chriſt's creatures; and in obedience to his command I take them.' After ſome diſcourſe, Mr. Blair ſaid to him, 'What think you now of Chriſt?' To whom he replied, 'I ſhall live and adore him!—Glory, glory to my Creator, and to my Redeemer for ever!—Glory ſhines in Emmanuel's land.' Afterwards he ſaid, 'O that all my brethren did know what a Maſter I have ſerved, and what peace I have this day! I ſhall ſleep in Chriſt, and when I awake, I ſhall be ſatisfied with his likeneſs!' Then he ſaid, 'This night ſhall cloſe the door, and put my anchor within the veil, I ſhall go away in a ſleep by five of the clock in the morning.' Which exactly fell out.—That night, though he was very weak, he often had this expreſſion, 'O for arms to embrace him! O for a well-tuned harp!'

When ſome ſpoke to him of his former painfulneſs and faithfulneſs in the work of God; he ſaid, 'I diſclaim all that; the port I would be in at, is redemption, and forgiveneſs of ſins, through his blood.' His laſt words were, 'Glory, glory dwelleth in Emmanuel's land.'

29. Hugh Kennedy, provoſt of Ayr, when he was a-dying, a miniſter ſaid to him; 'You have cauſe, Sir, to be aſſured that the angels of God are now waiting at the ſtoops of this bed to convey your ſoul to Abraham's boſom.' To whom his anſwer was, 'I am ſure thereof. And if the walls of this houſe could ſpeak, they could tell how many ſweet days I have had in fellowſhip with God, and how familiar he hath been with my ſoul.'—He was one of the greateſt wreſtlers with God that was in the age wherein he lived, and had moſt remarkable returns of prayer. The great Mr. Welch,

in a letter from France, ſaid of him, 'Happy is that city, yea happy is that nation, that hath Hugh Kennedy in it! I have myſelf certainly found the anſwers of his prayers from the Lord in my behalf.'

30. The great Mr. Robert Bruce, miniſter of Edinburgh, when dying through weakneſs and old age, being aſked by one of his friends, how matters ſtood now betwixt God and his ſoul? Anſwered, 'When I was young, I was diligent, and lived by faith in the Son of God, but now I am old, and not able to do ſo much; yet he condeſcends to feed me with lumps of ſenſe.'—That morning before he died, he came to breakfaſt at his table, and having eaten, as he uſed, one ſingle egg; he ſaid to his daughter, 'I think I am yet hungry, you may bring me another.' But preſently he fell into a deep meditation, and, having muſed a while, he ſaid, 'Hold daughter, hold! my Maſter calls me! With theſe words his ſight failed him, whereupon he called for the Bible; but finding his ſight gone, he ſaid, 'Caſt me up the eighth chapter of the epiſtle to the Romans, and ſet my finger on theſe words, "I am perſuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, &c. ſhall be able to ſeparate me from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus my Lord." Now, ſaid he, is my finger upon them? They told him it was. Then, without any more he ſaid, 'Now, God be with you, my children! I have breakfaſted with you, and ſhall ſup with my Lord Jeſus Chriſt this night." And ſo gave up the ghoſt.

31. John Stewart, provoſt of Ayr, was a ſingularly pious man, yet, when he lay a-dying, he ſaid to ſome about him; 'I go the way of all fleſh! and, it may be, ſome of you doubt nothing of my well-being; yea, I teſtify, that except when I ſlept, or was on buſineſs, I was not theſe ten years without thoughts of God, ſo long as I could be in going from

my houſe to the croſs; and yet I doubt myſelf, and am in great agony, yea, at the brink of deſpair.' But a day or two before he died, he turned his face to the wall, from the company, for two hours. Then Mr. Ferguſon the miniſter coming in, aſked what he was doing? Upon which he turned himſelf with theſe words, 'I have been fighting and working out my ſalvation with fear and trembling; and now, I bleſs God, it is perfected, ſealed, confirmed, and all fears are gone.'

32. Luther, when he fell ſick, made his will, in which he bequeathed his deteſtation of Popery to his friends, and to the paſtors of the church, having before made this verſe:

Peſtis eram vivus, moriens ero mors tua, Papa.

In his laſt will he ſaith, 'O Lord God! I thank thee, that thou wouldſt have me live a poor and indigent perſon upon earth. I have neither houſe nor lands, nor poſſeſſions, nor money to leave.—Thou, Lord, haſt given me a wife and children; them, Lord, I give back unto thee. Nouriſh, inſtruct and keep them, O thou the Father of orphans and Judge of the widow, as thou haſt done to me, ſo do to them.'

In his laſt prayer, February 18, 1546, he hath theſe words, 'I pray God to preſerve his goſpel among us, for the Pope and the council of Trent have grievous things in hand. O heavenly Father, I give thee thanks that thou haſt revealed to me thy Son Jeſus Chriſt, whom I believe, whom I profeſs, whom I glorify, and whom the Pope and the root of the wicked perſecute and diſhonour.' Mr. Fox ſaith of Luther, 'That a poor friar ſhould be able to ſtand againſt the Pope, was a great miracle; that he ſhould prevail againſt the Pope was a greater; and after all to die in peace, having ſo many enemies, was the greateſt of all.'

33. Mr. Joseph Allen, a most painful, laborious minister, being deprived of the use of his arms and legs before his death, was asked by a friend, how he could be so well contented to lie so long in that condition? He answered, 'What! is God my Father, Jesus Christ my Saviour, and the Holy Spirit my sanctifier and comforter; and shall I not be content without limbs and health? He is an unreasonable wretch that cannot be content with a God, though he had nothing else.'

When his people of Taunton came to Dorcester to see him, where he lay, he was much revived, and would be set up in his bed, have the curtains drawn by, and desired them to stand round about the bed; and caused take out his hand and hold it out to them, that they might take it, as he used formerly to do, when he had been absent from them. And though very weak, yet he spoke to them thus: 'O how it rejoiceth my heart to see your faces, and to hear your voices, though I cannot speak as heretofore unto you. Methinks, I am now like old Jacob, with all his sons about him. Now you see my weak estate, thus I have been for many weeks since I parted with you, but God hath been with me. My friends, life is mine, death is mine, in that covenant of which I preached to you, is all my salvation and all my desire: although my body do not prosper, I hope, thro' grace, my soul doth. I have lived a sweet life by the promises, and, I hope, thro' grace, can die by a promise. It is the promises of God that will stand by us. Nothing but God in them will stead us in a day of affliction. My dear friends, I feel the power of these doctrines I preached to you on my heart; the doctrines of faith, of repentance, of self denial, of the covenant of grace, of contentment, &c. O that ye would live over them! Now I cannot preach them to you. It is a shame for a believer to be cast down under afflictions, that

hath ſo many glorious privileges, juſtification, adoption, ſanctification and eternal glory. We ſhall be as the angels of God in a little while; nay, to ſay the truth, believers are, as it were, little angels already, that live in the power of faith. O, my friends, live like believers, trample this dirty world under your feet; be not taken with its comforts, nor diſquieted with its croſſes, you will be gone out of it ſhortly.'

When they came to take leave of him, he would needs pray with them, as his weak ſtate did ſuffer him. Then he ſaid, 'Farewell, my dear friends; go home and live over what I have preached to you, and the Lord provide for you when I am gone. Now I cannot preach to you, but let my waſted ſtrength and uſeleſs limbs be a ſermon to you. I am afraid of ſome of you, after all I have ſpoken to you.—There are many profeſſors who can pray well, and talk well, whom we ſhall find at the left hand of Chriſt another day. You have your trades, your eſtates, your relations; be not taken with theſe, but with God: O live on him! For the Lord's ſake, go home and take heed of the world! worldly cares, worldly comforts, worldly relations, &c. Oh! let not my labours and ſufferings, let not my waſted ſtrength and uſeleſs limbs, riſe up in judgment againſt you at the great day of the Lord.' Then he ſaid, 'The Lord having given authority to his miniſters to bleſs his people, accordingly I bleſs you in his name:' uſing the words he always uſed after a ſacrament: 'The Lord bleſs you, and keep you; the Lord cauſe his face to ſhine upon you, and give you peace. And the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jeſus, that great ſhepherd of the ſheep, through the blood of the everlaſting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt. To

whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.'

In the mornings, his firſt ſpeeches would be, (which he alſo uſed in his health) 'Now, we have one day more; this is one more for God; now let us live well this day: work hard for our ſouls; lay up much treaſure in heaven this day, for we have but a few to live.'

Being taken to the Bath, where he met with extraordinary kindneſs from ſtrangers (for many reſorted to him, to ſee him and hear him ſpeak, having heard what a monument of mercy he was) he did delight himſelf much, in the conſideration of the Lord's kindneſs to him, and the tokens of ſtrangers their love; and would often ſay, 'I was a ſtranger, and mercy took me in; in priſon, and it came to me; ſick and weak, and it viſited me.'

N. B. He had been much perſecuted and put in priſon, for no other crime but preaching the goſpel.

He had a moſt pious and affectionate wife, that waited cloſely upon him, to whom he ſaid, 'Now my dear heart, my companion in all my tribulations and afflictions, I thank thee for all thy pains and labours for me, at home and abroad, in priſon and liberty, in health and ſickneſs.' And he prayed that the Lord would requite her, fill her with all manner of grace and conſolations, and ſupport and carry her through all difficulties.

He had ſome conflicts with Satan a little before death. Once he uttered theſe words, 'Away, thou foul fiend, thou enemy of all mankind, thou ſubtile ſophiſter, art thou come now to moleſt me? Now I am juſt going! Now I am ſo weak and death upon me, trouble me not, for I am none of thine; I am the Lord's; Chriſt is mine, and I am his; his by covenant. I have ſworn myſelf to be the Lord's, and his I will be, therefore begone.' Theſe laſt words he repeated often, as pleading his covenanting with God, as a mean to reſiſt the devil and his

temptations. When he looked on his weak, conſumed hands, he would ſay, 'Theſe ſhall be changed! this vile body ſhall be made like to Chriſt's glorious body! O what a glorious day will the day of reſurrection be! Methinks I ſee it by faith! How will the ſaints lift up their heads and rejoice? And how ſad will the wicked world look then! O come, let us make haſte, our Lord will come ſhortly! If we long to be in heaven, let us haſten with our work; for when that is done away, we ſhall be fetched. O this vain, fooliſh, dirty world; I wonder how reaſonable creatures can ſo dote upon it! What is in it worth the looking after! I care not to be in it any longer than while my Maſter hath either doing or ſuffering work for me; were that done, farewell to earth.'

This eminent ſaint had this teſtimony given him by one: 'It may be ſaid of him in as high a degree as of moſt ſaints on earth, That each thought was to him a prayer, each prayer a ſong, each day a Sabbath, each meal a ſacrament, and ſo his life on earth, a foretaſte of that eternal repaſt to which he hath now arrived.

34. The noble Marquis of Argyle, being a zealous friend of our covenanted reformation, was put to death, May 27th, 1661. His friends contrived methods for making his eſcape out of the caſtle of Edinburgh, but he thanked them, and told them, he would not diſown the good cauſe he had ſo publicly eſpouſed, but reſolved to ſuffer the utmoſt. When the ſentence of death was paſt by the Parliament, Saturday, May 25th, he ſaid, 'I had the honour to ſet the crown upon the King's head, and now he haſtens me to a better crown than his own.' Then he was ſent to the tolbooth. His excellent Lady embracing him when he entered, wept bitterly, ſaying ſeveral times, 'The Lord will require it.' Not any in the room could refrain from tears, but the marquis

himſelf was perfectly compoſed, and ſaid, 'Forbear, forbear; truly I pity them, they know not what they are doing: they may ſhut me in where they pleaſe, but they cannot ſhut out God from me. For my part I am as content to be here as in the caſtle, and as content in the caſtle as in the tower of London, (where he was firſt put) and as content there, as when at liberty. And I hope to be as content upon the ſcaffold as any of them all.' He added, that he remembered a ſcripture cited to him lately by an honeſt miniſter in the caſtle, and endeavoured to put it in practice: when Ziklag was taken and burnt, and the people ſpoke of ſtoning David, "he encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God." All his ſhort time, till Monday, he ſpent with the greateſt ſerenity and cheerfulneſs, and in the proper exerciſes of a dying Chriſtian. He ſaid to ſome miniſters, allowed to be with him in the priſon, that ſhortly they would envy him, who was got before them. And added, 'Mind that I tell you, my ſkill fails me, if you who are miniſters will not either ſuffer much, or ſin much: for, though you go along with theſe men in part, if you do it not in all things, you are but where you were, and ſo muſt ſuffer: And if you go not at all in with them, you ſhall but ſuffer.'

The Marquis was naturally timorous, but he deſired thoſe about him to obſerve, as he could not but do, that the Lord had heard his prayers, and removed all fears from him. And indeed his friends work was to reſtrain and qualify his fervent longing after his diſſolution, and not to ſupport him under the near views of it. The Lord was exceeding kind to him at this time, for on Monday-morning, that day he ſuffered, when he was in the midſt of company, and thronged in ſubſcribing papers relating to his eſtate, he was ſo overcome with a ſingular manifeſtation from God, that he broke out in a rapture, and ſaid, 'I thought to have concealed

the Lord's goodneſs, but it will not do; I am now ordering my affairs, and God is ſealing my charter to a better inheritance, and juſt now ſaying to me, Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee.' After he had retired for ſome time alone, when he opened the door, Mr. Hutcheſon, one of the miniſters that attended him, ſaid to him, 'What cheer, my Lord?' He anſwered, 'Good cheer, ſir; the Lord hath again confirmed and ſaid to me, from heaven, Son, be of good cheer, thy ſins are forgiven thee!' and he guſhed out in abundance of tears of joy, ſo that he retired to the window, and wept there. Afterwards he ſaid, in a perfect rapture, to Mr. Hutcheſon, 'I think his kindneſs overcomes me; but God is good to me, that lets not out too much of it here, for he knows I could not bear it. Get my cloke, and let us go.' But being told that the town-clock was kept back, ſo that the hour was not yet come; he anſwered, 'They are far in the wrong;' and preſently kneeled down and prayed, before all preſent, in a moſt ſweet and heavenly manner, to the raviſhment of all that were there.

When he was going out to the ſcaffold, he ſaid, 'I could die like a Roman, but I chuſe rather to die like a Chriſtian. Come away, gentlemen, he that goes firſt, goes cleaneſt.' When going down, he called Mr. James Guthrie to him, and embracing him, in the moſt endearing way, took his farewell of him. Mr. Guthrie at parting addreſſed the Marquis thus, 'My lord, God hath been with you, he is with you, and God will be with you; and ſuch is my reſpect for your lordſhip, that if I were not under the ſentence of death myſelf, I could cheerfully die for your lordſhip.' So they parted for a very ſhort ſeaſon, in two or three days to meet in a better place.

The Marquis, in his ſpeech on the ſcaffold, had theſe words, 'God hath laid engagements upon Scotland, we are tied by covenant to religion and

reformation. Thoſe that were then unborn are engaged to it; and it paſſeth the power of any under heaven to abſolve a man from the oath of God.'

35. Mr. John Welſh, miniſter of the goſpel at Air, whom Mr. Rutherford, in his preface to his Survey of Antinomianiſm, calls that apoſtolic, heavenly and prophetical man of God; and there tells us, that he had it from thoſe that were witneſſes of his life, that of every twenty-four hours he gave uſually eight to prayer; and that he ſpent many nights in prayer to God, interceeding for ſuffering Proteſtants abroad as well as for his mother-church. This holy man, when priſoner in the caſtle of Blackneſs, and in the view of death (being condemned to it for maintaining the liberties of this church, though afterwards the ſentence was changed into baniſhment) in his letter to a Chriſtian lady hath theſe words: 'I long to eat of that tree which is planted in the midſt of the paradiſe of God, and to drink of the pure river, clear as cryſtal, that runs through the ſtreet of the New Jeruſalem. I long to be refreſhed with the ſouls of them that are under the altar, who are ſlain for the word of God, and the teſtimony that they held; and to have theſe long white robes given me, that I may walk in white raiment with thoſe glorious ſaints, who have waſhed their garments, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Why ſhould I think it a ſtrange thing to be removed from this place to that where my hope, my joy, my crown, my elder Brother, my head, my Father, my comforter, and all the glorious ſaints are, and where the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb is ſung joyfully; where we ſhall not be compelled to ſit by the rivers of Babylon, and hang up our harps on the willow-trees, but ſhall take them up, and ſing the new hallelujah, bleſſing, honour, glory, and power, to him that ſits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever? What is there under the old vault of the heavens,

and in this old worn earth, which is groaning under the bondage of corruption, that ſhould make me deſire to remain here? I expect that new heaven and new earth, wherein righteouſneſs dwelleth, wherein I ſhall reſt for evermore. I look to get entry into the new Jeruſalem, at one of theſe twelve gates, whereon are written the names of the twelve tribes of Iſrael. I know that Jeſus Chriſt hath prepared them for me. Why may I not, then, with boldneſs in his blood, ſtep into that glory, where my head and Lord hath gone before me? Jeſus Chriſt is the door and the porter; who then ſhall hold me out? O thou faireſt among the children of men, the delight of mankind, the light of the Gentiles, the glory of the Jews, the life of the dead, the joy of angels and ſaints, my ſoul panteth to be with thee. I refuſe not to die with thee, that I may live with thee; I refuſe not to ſuffer with thee, that I may rejoice with thee. O when ſhall I be filled with his love! Surely, if a man knew how precious it is, he would count all things but droſs and dung to gain it! I long for that ſcaffold, or that ax, or that cord, that might be to me that laſt ſtep of this my wearieſome journey, to go to thee, my Lord. Who am I, that he ſhould firſt have called me, and then conſtituted me a miniſter of the glad-tidings of the goſpel of ſalvation, theſe many years, and now laſt of all to be a ſufferer for his cauſe and kingdom? Theſe two points, *1ſt*, That Chriſt is the head of his church. *2dly*, That ſhe is free, in her government, from all other juriſdiction, except Chriſt; yea, as free as any kingdom under heaven, not only to convocate, hold, and keep her meetings and aſſemblies, but alſo to judge of all her affairs amongſt her members and ſubjects: theſe are the cauſe of our ſufferings. I would be moſt glad to be offered up as a ſacrifice for ſo glorious a truth; but, alas! I fear that my ſins, and the abuſe of ſo glorious a thing as I have found, deprive me of ſo

fair a crown; yet my Lord doth know, if he would call me to it, and ſtrengthen me in it, it would be to me the moſt glorious day, and gladeſt hour I ever ſaw in my life; but I am in his hands, to do with me whatſoever ſhall pleaſe him,' &c.

This eminent ſaint ſpent much of his time in the mount of prayer, and wreſtling with God, was admitted to very intimate nearneſs with him, and had many ſecret things revealed to him from God. He uſed to ſay, 'He wondered how a Chriſtian could lie in bed all night, without riſing to ſpend ſome of the night in prayer and praiſe.'

In his laſt illneſs he had a great weakneſs in his knees, cauſed by his continual kneeling at prayer; the fleſh thereof became inſenſible, and hard like a ſort of horn; but when, in his weakneſs, he was deſired to remit ſomewhat of his former painfulneſs, his anſwer was, 'He had his life of God, and therefore it ſhould be ſpent for him.' During his ſickneſs he was ſo filled with the ſenſible enjoyment of God, that he was ſometimes overheard in prayer to have theſe words: 'Lord, hold thy hand, it is enough, thy ſervant is a clay veſſel, and can hold no more.'

36. Mr. Chriſtopher Love, miniſter of Laurence Jury in London, who was beheaded on Tower-hill, Auguſt 22d, 1651, in the time of Cromwell's uſurpation, and for ſuſpected plotting againſt his government; his words on the ſcaffold were moſt pathetic and weighty. 'Although, ſaid he, there be but little between me and death, yet this bears up my heart, there is little between me and heaven. It comforted Dr. Taylor the martyr, when he was going to execution, that there were but two ſtiles between him and his Father's houſe; there is a leſſer way between me and my Father's houſe, but two ſteps between me and glory. It is but lying down upon that block, and I ſhall aſcend upon a

throne. I am this day ſailing towards the ocean of eternity, through a rough paſſage to my haven of reſt; through a red ſea to the promiſed land. Methinks I hear God ſay to me, as he did to Moſes, "Go up to Mount Nebo, and die there;" ſo to me, Go up to Towerhill and die there. Iſaac ſaid of himſelf, that he was old, and yet he knew not the day of his death: but I cannot ſay ſo: I am young, and yet I know the day of my death; and I know the kind of my death, and the place of my death alſo. I am put to ſuch a kind of death as two famous preachers of the goſpel were put to before me, John the Baptiſt, and Paul the apoſtle; they were both beheaded. I read alſo in Rev. xx. 4. "The ſaints were beheaded for the word of God, and teſtimony of Jeſus." But herein is the diſadvantage which I lie under in the thoughts of many, they judge that I ſuffer not for the word of God, or for conſcience, but for meddling with ſtate-matters. To this I ſhall briefly ſay, that it is an old trick of Satan, to impute the cauſe of God's peoples ſufferings, to be contrivements againſt the ſtate, when, in truth, it is their religion and conſcience they are perſecuted for. The rulers of Iſrael would have put Jeremiah to death on a civil account, though, indeed, it was only the truth of his prophecy that made the rulers angry with him; and yet upon a civil account, they pretend, he muſt die, becauſe he fell away to the Chaldeans, and would have brought in foreign forces to invade them. The ſame thing is laid to my charge, of which I am as innocent as Jeremiah was. So Paul, though he did but preach Jeſus Chriſt, yet his enemies would have put him to death, under pretence that he was a mover of ſedition. Upon a civil account, my life is pretended to be taken away, whereas it is becauſe I purſue my covenant, and will not proſtitute my principles and conſcience to the ambition and luſt of men. I had rather

die a covenant-keeper, than live a covenant-breaker. Behold, I am this day making a double exchange; I am changing a pulpit for a ſcaffold, and a ſcaffold for a throne; and I might add a third, I am changing the preſence of this numerous multitude on Tower-hill, for the innumerable company of ſaints and angels in heaven, the holy hill of Zion; and I am changing a guard of ſoldiers for a guard of angels, which will receive me, and carry me to Abraham's boſom. This ſcaffold is the beſt pulpit that ever I preached in; in my church-pulpit, God, thro' his grace, made me an inſtrument to bring others to heaven; but in this pulpit, he will bring me to heaven.' Afterwards he ſaid, 'Though my blood be not the blood of nobles, yet it is Chriſtian blood, miniſter's blood, yea more, it is alſo innocent blood. I magnify the riches of God's mercy and grace towards me, that I, who was born in Wales, an obſcure country, and of obſcure parents, ſhould be ſingled out to honourable ſufferings. For the firſt fourteen years of my life, I never heard a ſermon preached; yet, in the fifteenth year of my life, it pleaſed God to convert me. Bleſſed be God, who not only made me a Chriſtian, but alſo a miniſter, judging me faithful, and putting me into the miniſtry, which is my glory. I would rather be a preacher in a pulpit, than a prince upon a throne. I would rather be an inſtrument to bring ſouls to heaven, than that all nations ſhould bring tribute to me. Formerly I have been under a ſpirit of bondage; yea, ſometimes I have had more fear in drawing a tooth, than now I have for cutting off my head. When fear was upon me, death was not near; now, when death is near to me, my fear is evaniſhed. I am comforted in this, tho' men kill me, they cannot damn me; tho' they thruſt me out of the world, yet they cannot ſhut me out of heaven. When I have ſhed my blood, I expect the full declaration of the

remiſſion of ſins thro' the blood of Jeſus Chriſt. I am going to my long home, and ye to your ſhort homes; but I ſhall be at my home before ye be at yours.' He prayed that, ſeeing he was called to do the work which he never did, he might have the ſtrength which he never had.

Dr. WILD, *in his* Elegy, *hath theſe lines.*

Methinks I heard beheaded ſaints above,
Call to each other, Sirs, make room for LOVE!
Who, when he came to tread the fatal ſtage,
(Which prov'd his glory, and his en'mies' rage,)
His blood ne'er run to's heart, Chriſt's blood was there,
Reviving it; his own was all to ſpare;
Which, riſing in his cheeks, did ſeem to ſay,
Is this the blood you thirſt for? Tak't, I pray.
Spectators in his looks ſuch life did ſee,
That they appear'd more like to die than he!
Lightnings, which fill'd the air with blazing light,
Did ſerve for torches at that diſmal night;
In which, and all next day, for many hours,
Heav'n groan'd in thunder, and did weep in ſhow'rs.
Nor do I wonder that God thunder'd ſo,
When *Boanerges* murder'd lay below.

37. Mrs. Joyce Lewis, being condemned to be burnt for the Proteſtant religion in Queen Mary's reign, when ſhe heard that the writ for her execution was come, ſhe ſaid to her friends: 'As for death, I fear it not; for, when I behold the amiable countenance of Jeſus Chriſt, my dear Saviour, the ugly face of death doth not much trouble me.'

38. Bullinger of Zurich, in his ſickneſs, ſaid to his friends, 'If the Lord will make any farther uſe of me and my miniſtry in his church, I will willingly obey him; but if he pleaſe (as I much deſire) to take me out of this miſerable life, I ſhall exceedingly rejoice, that he pleaſeth to take me out of this corrupt and wretched age, to go to my Saviour

Christ. For, said he, if Socrates was glad when his death approached, because, as he thought, he should go to Homer, Hesiod, and other learned men, whom he expected to meet with in the other world; how much more do I joy, who am sure that I shall see my Saviour Jesus Christ, as also the saints, patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and all the holy men who have lived from the beginning of the world? Now, when I am sure to see them, and to partake of their joys, why should I not willingly die to enjoy their perpetual society and glory.'

39. Mr. Theodore Beza, a famous pastor in Geneva, when he apprehended the approach of death, revised his will, and so easing himself of all worldly thoughts, wholly betook himself to expect the time of his departure, which he had much longed for. He oft used the apostle's saying, "We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." And that of Augustine, *Domine, quod cœpisti, perfice ne in portu naufragium accidat.* 'Lord, perfect that which thou hast begun, that I suffer not shipwreck in the haven.' And that saying of Bernard, *Domine sequimur te, per te, ad te. Te, quia, veritas: Per te, quia, via. Ad te, quia, vita.* 'Lord, we will follow thee, by thee, to thee. Thee, because thou art the truth: by thee, because thou art the way: to thee, because thou art the life.'

40. Melancton, of Wittemberg, Luther's dear companion, said, 'That he much longed to be dissolved, for two reasons: *1st*, That he might enjoy the much desired presence and sight of Christ, and of the heavenly church. *2dly*, That he might be freed from the cruel and implacable discord of divines.'

41. Mr. John Bradford, a minister and martyr in queen Mary's reign, when the keeper told him that the next day he was to be burnt in Smithfield, he put off his cap, and lifting up his eyes to heaven, said, 'I thank God, for it comes not now to me on

a ſudden, but as a thing waited for every day and hour; the Lord make me worthy thereof.' One Creſſwel offering to interpoſe for him, and deſiring to know what his requeſt was, he ſaid, 'I have no requeſt to make; if the queen gives me my life, I will thank her; if ſhe will baniſh me, I will thank her; if ſhe will burn me, I will thank her; if ſhe will condemn me to perpetual impriſonment, I will thank her.' The Chancellor preſſing him to do as others had done, in hopes of the queen's mercy, he ſaid, 'My Lord, I deſire mercy with God's mercy, that is, without doing or ſaying any thing againſt God and his truth; but mercy with God's wrath, God keep me from. God's mercy, added he, I deſire, and alſo would be glad of the queen's favour to live as a ſubject without clog on conſcience; but otherwiſe the Lord's mercy is better to me than life. Life in his diſpleaſure, is worſe than death; and death in his favour, is true life.'

In his letter to Dr. Cranmer, Dr. Ridley, and Dr. Latimer, he hath theſe words: 'Our dear brother, Rogers, hath broken the ice valiantly. This day, or to-morrow, at the uttermoſt, hearty Hooper, ſincere Saunders, and truſty Taylor, will end their courſe, and receive their crown. The next am I, who hourly look for the porter to open me the gates, after them, to enter into the deſired reſt. God forgive me mine unthankfulneſs for his exceeding great mercy. Tho' I ſuffer juſtly (for I have been a great hypocrite, unthankful, &c. The Lord pardon me; yea, he hath done it, he hath done it indeed) yet what evil hath he done? Chriſt, whom the prelates perſecute; his truth, which they hate in me; hath done no evil, nor deſerved death. O what am I, Lord, that thou ſhouldeſt thus magnify me? Is it thy wont, to ſend for ſuch a wretched hypocrite in a fiery chariot, as thou didſt ſend for Elias.'

In one of his meditations, after confeſſing of ſin, he ſaid, 'O what now may we do? Deſpair! No:

for thou art God, and therefore good; thou art merciful, and therefore thou forgiveſt ſin; with thee there is mercy and propitiation, and therefore thou art worſhipped. When Adam ſinned, thou gaveſt him mercy before he deſired it; and wilt thou deny us mercy, who now deſire the ſame? Adam excuſed his fault, and accuſed thee; but we accuſe ourſelves, and excuſe thee; and ſhall we be ſent empty away. How often in the wilderneſs didſt thou ſpare Iſrael, and defer thy plagues, at the requeſt of Moſes, when the people themſelves made no petition to thee! Now we do not only make our petitions to thee, but alſo have a Mediator, far above Moſes, to appear for us, even Jeſus Chriſt thine own Son; and ſhall we, dear Lord, depart aſhamed? O merciful Lord, for thine own glory, ſuffer not the enemy of thy Son Chriſt, the Romiſh Antichriſt, thus wretchedly to delude and draw from thee our poor brethren, for whom thy dear Son once died, &c. Suffer him not to ſeduce the ſimple ſort with his fond opinion that his falſe gods, his blind, mumbling, feigned religion, or his fooliſh ſuperſtition, doth give him ſuch conqueſt, ſuch victories, and ſuch triumphs over us. But, O Lord, this is thy righteous judgment, to puniſh us with the tyrannical yoke of blindneſs, becauſe we have caſt away from us the ſweet yoke of the wholeſome word of thy Son, our Saviour.'

In his letter to Mrs. Anne Warcup, he ſaid, 'My ſtaff ſtandeth at the door; I look continually for the ſheriff to come for me; and I bleſs God I am ready for him. Now I go to practiſe that which I have preached. Now I am climbing up the hill; it will cauſe me puff and blow before I come to the cliff. The hill is ſteep and high, my breath is ſhort, and my ſtrength is feeble. Pray, therefore, to the Lord for me, that, as I have now thro' his goodneſs even almoſt come to the top, I may by his grace beſtrength-

ened not to reſt till I come where I ſhould be.'

He was ſingular for humility and ſelf-abaſement, though a moſt eminent ſaint. He ſubſcribed ſome of his letters, "The moſt miſerable, hard-hearted, unthankful ſinner, John Bradford.—A very painted hypocrite, John Bradford.—*Miſerrimus peccator*, John Bradford.—The ſinful John Bradford.'

42. Mr. Edward Deering, a little before his death, ſaid to his friends, 'As for my death, I bleſs God, I feel and find ſo much inward joy and comfort to my ſoul, that, if I were put to my choice whether I would die or live, I would a thouſand times rather chuſe death than life, if it may ſtand with the holy will of God.'

43. Mr. Robert Rollock, when a dying, prayed, 'Lord, I have hitherto ſeen but darkly, in the glaſs of thy word; now grant that I may enjoy the eternal fruition of thy countenance, which I have ſo much deſired and longed for. Haſte, Lord, and do not tarry; I am weary both of nights and days; come, Lord Jeſus, that I may come to thee. Break theſe eye-ſtrings, and give me others! I deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with thee! haſte, Lord Jeſus, and defer no longer. Go forth, my weak life, and let a better ſucceed. O Lord Jeſus, thruſt thy hand into my body, and take my ſoul to thyſelf. O my ſweet Lord, ſet this ſoul of mine free, that it may enjoy her huſband.'

44. Galeacius Caracciolus, marquis of Vico, when a dying, took his leave of his wife and all his Chriſtian friends, telling them that he would lead them the way to heaven. And he cried to Jeſus Chriſt, that 'as he had fought him all his life, ſo now he would receive and acknowledge him as his own.'

45. The famous lord Du Pleſſis, in France, when a-dying, was much concerned for the church of God in diſtreſs, praying earneſtly for her deliverance. He particularly bleſſed ſuch of his grand children

as were following their ſtudies of learning, ſaying, 'That he was aſſured they ſhould be bleſſed with the bleſſings both of heaven above, and of the earth beneath.' When a miniſter ſpoke of the ſervice he had done the church by his writings, he ſaid, 'Alas, what was there of mine in that work? Say not that it was I, but God by me.' Then, lifting up his hands above his head, he cried three times, 'Mercy, Mercy, Mercy.' Adding, that he did it, to ſhew that it was the alone mercy of God to which he had recourſe. And declared, that his faith was altogether founded upon the goodneſs of God in Jeſus Chriſt, who, by the Father, had been made unto him, as to all others that believe in him, "Wiſdom, righteouſneſs, ſanctification and redemption."—'Away, ſaid he, away with all merit; I call for nothing but mercy, free mercy.' When one was bleſſing God for giving him ſuch peace and comfort at his end, he ſaid, 'I feel, I feel, what I ſpeak.' As to his faith of the truths of God, he ſaid, 'He was entirely perſuaded thereof, by the demonſtration of God's holy Spirit, which was more powerful, more clear, and more certain than all the demonſtrations of Euclid.' When ſecretly praying, he was overheard ſaying, in broken ſentences, 'I fly, I fly to heaven. Let the angels carry me to the boſom of my Saviour.' Afterwards he ſaid, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and I ſhall ſee him with theſe eyes;" *biſce oculus*; which words he repeated four or five times.

46. Jerome of Prague, when he was faſtened to the ſtake, and the executioner began to kindle the fire behind him, he bade him kindle it before his face; 'For, ſaid he, if I had been afraid of it, I had not come to this place, having had ſo many opportunities offered me to eſcape it.'

47. Mr. Hooker, a miniſter in New England, when one that ſtood weeping at his bed-ſide, when

he lay a-dying, ſaid to him, 'Sir, you are going to receive the reward of all your labours;' he replied, 'Brother, I am going to receive mercy.'

48. Mr. Heron, another miniſter there, when dying and leaving a family of many ſmall children; his poor wife fell a-weeping, and ſaid, 'Alas! what will become of all theſe children?' He preſently and pleaſantly replied, 'Never fear, he that feeds the young ravens, will not ſtarve the young Herons.' And indeed it came to paſs accordingly. It was obſerved, concerning the Engliſh martyrs, under the bloody Marian perſecution, 'That none of them went more joyfully to the ſtake, than thoſe who had the greateſt families to commit unto the Lord.'

49. Chryſoſtom, when the empreſs Eudoxa (an Arian) ſent a threatening meſſage to him, he ſaid, 'Go tell her, *Nil niſi peccatum timeo*, I fear nothing but ſin.' When he was ſentenced to baniſhment, he ſaid, 'None of theſe things trouble me; for I ſaid before, within myſelf, if the empreſs will, let her baniſh me; "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof:' If ſhe will, let her ſaw me aſunder; Iſaiah was ſo uſed: If ſhe will, let her caſt me into the ſea; I will remember Jonah: If ſhe will, let her caſt me into a burning fiery furnace, or to the wild beaſts; the three children and Daniel were ſo ſerved: If ſhe will, let her ſtone me, or cut off my head; I have Stephen and the Baptiſt for my companions: If ſhe will, let her take away all my ſubſtance; Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither again.'

But I muſt break off, for time would fail me, to enumerate the many inſtances of the faith, love, patience, hope, courage and conſtancy of the ſaints and martyrs of Jeſus, when in the view of death. Some have told their perſecutors, 'That they might pull their hearts out of their bodies, but they could never pluck the truth out of their hearts.' Others

have ſaid, 'That if every hair of their heads were men, they ſhould all ſuffer death for Chriſt and his truths!'—Oh, ſaid one of them, can I die but once for Chriſt!'

To conclude, Let theſe examples prompt us to ſeek grace from God, and make it our earneſt ſtudy to imitate and follow ſuch a cloud of witneſſes, that we may die martyrs in reſolution, our graces may be moſt lively at the laſt, our evening ſun may ſhine brighteſt, and we may go off the ſtage glorifying God, and leaving a ſweet favour behind us, as theſe famous worthies, whoſe praiſe is in the churches, have done before us.

DIRECT. VII. *Let dying perſons be much in prayer and ejaculations to God.*

PRAYER is the native breath of renewed ſouls; it is as neceſſary to their ſpiritual life, as breath is to the natural life, Lam. iii. 56. "Hide not thine ear at my breathing." The firſt thing a child of God doth, when he is new-born, is to breathe by prayer, Acts ix. 11. "Behold he prayeth." And it is alſo his laſt work in the world, to pray, Acts vii. 59, 60. "And they ſtoned Stephen, calling upon God, and ſaying, Lord Jeſus receive my ſpirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this ſin to their charge. And when he had ſaid this, he fell aſleep." A dying Chriſtian hath many to pray for; he is to pray for the church of God, for his friends and relations, and alſo for his enemies, as Stephen did, of whom I ſpake before. But eſpecially he muſt pray for himſelf, that ſin may be forgiven, and that he may have ſafe conduct through the dark valley. I have heard of ſome that have been found dead upon their knees; a noble poſture to die in! How agreeable is it to enter praying into the land of praiſe! So

did Stephen, yea, ſo did our bleſſed Saviour himſelf; 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.—Father, into thy hand I commend my ſpirit.' The laſt words that holy Uſher uttered, were, 'But, Lord, in pecial forgive my ſins of omiſſion.'—'Lord, ſaid dying Beza, perfect that which thou haſt begun, that I ſuffer not ſhipwreck in the haven.' I remember to have read of an old miniſter, when he found death approaching, he ſaid, 'I deſire to die like the poor thief, crying to the crucified Jeſus for mercy. I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing, except what is unworthy. My eye, my hope and faith is to Chriſt on the croſs. I bring an unworthineſs like that of the poor dying thief unto him; and have no more to plead than he. Like the poor thief crucified with him, I am waiting to be received, by the infinite grace of my Lord, into his kingdom.' Let us, in like manner, die crying to a crucified Jeſus for mercy. Lord, remember me, now thou art in thy kingdom.

O, dying Chriſtian, remember the time of prayer is near an end; after death there will be no more occaſion for prayer. O then beg that the ſpirit of prayer may be ſo poured down upon you at this time, that you may be enabled to pour out your heart before God both for yourſelf and others. O how earneſtly ſhould you pray then, when you are taking your leave of prayer! Mind the example which your Redeemer gave you; it was before his death that he offered up prayers and ſupplications, with ſtrong crying and tears unto God. I acknowledge, ſick and dying perſons are frequently out of caſe for making prayers of any great length or continuance (which conſideration ſhould excite us to the greater diligence in prayer in the time of our health) and therefore they ought to be the more frequent and fervent in ſhort and ſuitable ejaculations and petitions to God, as their exigencies do require.

Some Meditatious *and* Ejaculations, *proper for ſick and dying perſons, eſpecially for a dying believer.*

O Lord, thou art the God of my life, and haſt the keys of death in thy hand. Thou haſt meaſured the length of my life, and appointed the hour of my death. The number of my months and days is with thee, and thou haſt appointed the bounds over which I cannot paſs.

What is my life but a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vaniſheth away? At the longeſt, how ſhort is it? And at the ſtrongeſt, how weak? "What man is it that liveth here, and ſhall not ſee death? When a few days are come, I will go the way whence I ſhall not return." God hath decreed it, ſin hath deſerved it, my frailty demonſtrates it, death's harbingers proclaim it, and I muſt expect it. There is no diſcharge in this war, no exemption from death's ſtroke. Death's meſſengers are come to warn me, that my laſt day and laſt hour draweth nigh. The ſound of their maſter's feet is behind them. This clay houſe muſt be diſſolved, my ſoul diſlodged, and my place here ſhall know me no more. I will be quickly as water ſpilt on the ground, that cannot be gathered up again. O that I may be ſuitably exerciſed in my preſent weak and dying condition!

When my fleſh faileth, and my heart fainteth within me, O that God may be the ſtrength of my heart and portion for ever! When the keepers of the houſe do tremble, let God watch over it, and be the keeper of my ſoul. When the grinders do ceaſe, becauſe they are few, let my ſoul be fed with manna from heaven. When the daughters of muſic are brought low, let my ſoul be diſpoſed for hearing the ſong of Moſes and the Lamb in the temple above. When theſe that look out at the windows are darkened, let the eyes of my ſoul be enlightened

to behold, with the dying martyr Stephen, the heavens opened, and the glorious Jesus standing on the right hand of God, making intercession for me, and ready to receive me. Let my hope and desire look out at the windows, and say, "Why is his chariot so long a-coming; and why tarry the wheels of his chariot? Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart on the mountains of Bether."

O that I may observe the afflicting hand of God in my present sickness! Surely affliction cometh not out of the dust, nor doth trouble spring out of the ground. O Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation, nor chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak; and heal me; for my bones are vexed. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity. The sorrows of my heart are enlarged, O bring me out of my distresses. Look upon my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sin. I look for sympathy to my great High Priest, who is touched with the feelings of my infirmities. My help and strength is in him.

O that, when I am afflicted, I may not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him. Let me hear the rod, and him that hath appointed it. Let me kiss the rod, and accept of the punishment of mine iniquity. O that in my affliction I may be helped to humble myself greatly before the God of my fathers, and make a true and penitent confession of my sins.

Oh! what shall I say to thee, O thou preserver of men? I will say, Lord, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. I acknowledge, that through an evil heart of unbelief, I have many a time departed away from the living God. O how vainly and foolishly have I lived in

the world! How laviſh of my precious time! How unmindful of my latter end! How careleſs of my immortal ſoul! How little in preparation for eternity! Oh! my own heart condemns me, my ſins teſtify againſt me; and thou who knoweſt them better than I do myſelf, together with their ſeveral aggravations, mighteſt juſtly condemn me to. But my comfort is, that with thee the Lord there is mercy, that thou mayeſt be feared, and with thy Son there is plenteous redemption: wherefore, for his ſake, be pleaſed to forgive me all my bypaſt tranſgreſſions, whether in thought, word or deed, thoſe I remember, and thoſe I have forgotten, and let them neither be charged on me, to my ſhame and confuſion in this world, nor to my everlaſting ruin in that which is to come. Lord, forgive the follies of my childhood, the extravagancies of my youth, and all the iniquities of riper years.

Oh! I am polluted with ſin, and dare not appear before God with my own filthy rags upon me. When Adam loſt the garment of original righteouſneſs, he fled from God, and dreaded the ſummons of offended juſtice. Now, there is no appearing before God with acceptance, but in the garment of his Son, my elder brother. None can have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all, but by the blood of Jeſus. O enable me to diſclaim whatſoever duties I have performed, or graces I have exerciſed, and to rely on a crucified Chriſt alone, for pardon and life. Tho' thou ſlayeſt me, let me die truſting in and cleaving to a crucified Jeſus.

Now the powers of darkneſs will ſeek to raiſe tempeſts to ſhipwreck the veſſel of my ſoul, when it would enter into the eternal haven. O that like the wiſe mariner, when the ſtorm approacheth, I may endeavour to ſecure the veſſel with the anchors of faith and hope, faſtened on the rock Chriſt.

O that, when the time of combat with my laſt

enemy cometh, I may above all take the ſhield of faith, whereby I may be ſheltered from the ſting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

O that the Lord of hoſts, the Captain of my ſalvation, may be with me in my laſt conflict, and may help me to put on the whole armour of God, and give me ſkill to uſe it, that I may be able to ſtand in the evil day? "Teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, that through thee I may do valiantly, and tread down all mine enemies." O that now I may ſo finiſh my courſe, and fight the good fight of faith, that at death I may receive the crown of righteouſneſs, which the righteous Judge will give to all that love his appearing. O that my faith may ripen into a full aſſurance, that I may go off the ſtage with joy, and an abundant entrance may be adminiſtered unto me into the kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt!

O that the night of my death may ſhine bright with the ſparkling ſtars of heavenly grace. Lord, increaſe my faith; let the pilgrim's ſtaff of faith be never out of my hand, till I come to my journey's end. O let me get Chriſt in my arms, like old Simeon before his death; that I may ſay, like him, "Now let thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation." Kindle the fire of heavenly love in my ſoul, and give me a taſte of heavenly joys. O for one beam of thy light, to baniſh away all my doubts and fears! Lord, let in ſomething of heaven to my ſoul, before itſelf go into heaven.

Lord, take me not out of this life till thou haſt fitted me for a better. May I be fitted for heaven before I leave the earth, and finiſh my work before I finiſh my courſe! Make me ready to meet thee at thy coming, that ſo thy coming may not be the matter of my terror, but the matter of my hope,

deſires, and joyful expectations. O that I may be in a longing frame for that bleſſed time, when he will come and put a period to all my ſins, ſorrows, troubles and temptations here; and when I ſhall exchange my preſent being in the body, for an everlaſting being with the Lord! Lord, ſtrengthen my faith and hope, that ſo neither the ſweetneſs of life, the pain of death, nor apprehenſions about my future ſtate, may make me unwilling to die. Is my Redeemer aſcended and gone before to prepare a place for me; why then ſhould I be ſlothful to go in and poſſeſs the good land?

Mercy hath filled up all my life, and brought me near to the end of it; O let it not leave me now, when all the enjoyments of the world are as nothing to me, and I am to take an everlaſting farewell of them all. Now one ſmile of thy face, one taſte of thy love, would be ſtrength and joy to my departing ſoul. O remember the word to thy ſervant, upon which thou haſt cauſed me to hope; haſt thou not ſaid, "I will never leave thee nor forſake thee?" O fulfil this word to me in the time of my need. O let me never go off the ſtage with a heavy heart, or a guilty conſcience; but may I depart in peace, and ſleep in Jeſus. Let me breathe out my departing ſoul to thee, and truſt it in thy hand and ſafe keeping; and let my fleſh reſt in hope of riſing glorioufly at the laſt day, through him who is the reſurrection and the life, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

Love and praiſe is the exercife of ſaints for ever; may I be acquainted with it here! O ſhall I not love and praiſe him, who hath forgiven all my iniquities, healed all my diſeaſes, redeemed my life from deſtruction, and crowned me with loving kindneſs and tender mercies? He hath cauſed goodneſs and mercy follow me all the days of my life; and ſhall I not follow him with praiſes at the end of it?

Now the time of my departure is at hand, and

the lamp of life is ready to be extinguiſhed. O that I may die in faith, that whether the lamp go out of its own accord, or by ſome ſudden blaſt, it may be lighted again by the immortal beams of the Sun of righteouſneſs! And tho' I be overtaken with the ſleep of death, and lie down in the bed of the grave, yet I ſhall awake again in the morning of the reſurrection, that morning which ſhall never be ſucceeded by an evening; when I ſhall behold thy face in righteouſneſs, and be eternally ſatisfied with thy likeneſs.

Now I am going the way of all the earth, ready to launch forth into eternity, where I ſhall be fixed in my everlaſting condition. Grant me, Lord, the perfect uſe of my ſenſes, of my reaſon and underſtanding, that I may glorify thy name, and edify my neighbours to the laſt moment of my departure. And now, when I am to conflict with the king of terrors, O ſupport and aſſiſt me in my foreſt extremities and laſt agonies. O mercifully mitigate death's pangs, and let my paſſage be eaſy, and my landing ſafe. Stand by me in my dying moments, and ſecure my ſoul in thy hands from all its deadly enemies. And when I am numbered among the dead, let me alſo be numbered among the redeemed and bleſſed of the Lord for ever.

O Lord, thou determineſt both the bounds of man's life, and the bounds of his habitation. If a hair of my head cannot fall to the ground without thy providence, far leſs can my whole body fall into the grave without it. Thou haſt told me plainly that I muſt die, but mercifully haſt thou concealed the time, place and manner, that I might always ſtand upon my guard, every hour expect thy coming, and have my accounts in my hand, always prepared to give them up to thee my Judge. Juſtly mighteſt thou have ſnatched me away by a ſurpriſing call and ſudden ſtroke: but in thy goodneſs thou giveſt me warning and time to ſet my houſe and

ſoul in order. O graciouſly finiſh now what is wanting of the work of thy grace in my heart and ſoul, and thoroughly accompliſh and furniſh me to appear in thy bleſſed preſence. May I now die to ſin every hour, that I may not die for ſin hereafter. Cauſe ſin wholly to die before me, that it may not riſe in judgment againſt me after death.

O God, be thou my refuge and ſtrength, and a very preſent help in trouble; and then I will not fear tho' the waters of affliction rage and be troubled, and tho' all the mountains of earthly comforts ſhake with the ſwelling thereof. There is a river, the ſtreams whereof ſhall make glad the city of God. O let my ſoul dwell beſide theſe living ſtreams, and drink of them for ever. In the valley of the ſhadow of death, Lord, be thou preſent, as the good ſhepherd, with thy guiding rod, and ſupporting ſtaff; and make my departure eaſy and full of peace and hope. Lord, carry me ſafe thro' the dark paſſage upon which I am entering, and let me find it a gate to glory, a door opened into the everlaſting kingdom and joy of the Lord. Lord Jeſus, receive my ſpirit, and let it be preſented juſtified and ſpotleſs to the Father, that it may come to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, and join with them in ſinging the new ſong, "Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, to receive power, honour, glory, and bleſſing for ever." Amen.

SOME MEDITATIONS

For drooping Believers, when death is near.

TRavellers, who have met with many ſtorms, troubles, and dangers in their journies, rejoice when they come near their own country; and ſhall not I, a ſtranger and pilgrim, that hath been long wandering in a wilderneſs, be glad when I come near my bleſſed home, my dear friends, and eternal habitation?

With what cheerfulneſs do ſome women endure the pains of child-bearing, being ſupported with the hopes of a child's being born into the world? And what is the joy of a man-child being brought into this ſinful and miſerable world, to the joy of a ſanctified ſoul's being brought out of it into heaven for ever? It is pleaſant, when the hard winter goeth over, the meſſengers of the ſpring, the ſinging of birds doth come: and ſhall not I rejoice, when ſickneſs and forerunners of death do tell me, that the winter of my darkneſs and trouble is paſt, and the ſummer of my eternal light and joy is at hand?

What though death be the king of terrors? Is not glorious Chriſt the king of comforts? Have not I met already with this bleſſed king; and why ſhould I fear to meet with the other? O let my ſtrength and ſupport at this time come from Chriſt my covenanted Redeemer.

O Lord, deliver my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling! O bring me out of the miry clay, ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings, and put a new ſong in my mouth, even praiſes to our God?

If Jacob went down ſo cheerfully into Egypt, when God had ſaid unto him, "Fear not to go down, for I will go down with thee, and I will bring thee up again;" why ſhould a believer fear to go down to the grave, when God hath undertaken to go down with him thither, and to bring him up again? His body may be turned into duſt, but God is in covenant with his duſt, and will not ſuffer the leaſt particle of it to be loſt.

Are not the righteous taken away from the evil to come? Do they not reſt on their beds, and enter into peace? Why then ſhould I grudge at dying? When the Lord is to bring heavy wrath and judgments on a land, he frequently houſeth many of his people in heaven before-hand; and

how happy are theſe that get into the houſe before the ſweeping hail-ſhower doth fall. A believer needeth not to look for any ſettled fair weather in this world: it will be nothing but one ſhower up and another down, till he be houſed in heaven. O why then ſhould I linger in this wilderneſs?

How highly dignified is the believer, in being made an heir of God, and a joint-heir with his own Son Jeſus Chriſt? So that Chriſt and the believer do, as it were, divide heaven betwixt them; they have the ſame Father, dwell in the ſame houſe, ſit at the ſame table, reign on the ſame throne, and partake of the ſame glory. O what honour is this which is put upon a worm of the earth! It is, indeed, but little that the young heir enjoys of the inheritance while in this world; no more than will ſerve to bear his charges to heaven, where he ſhall get all, forget his preſent ſtraits, and remember his poverty no more. O why then ſhould not I, like a young heir, be looking and longing for the expiring of my minority, when I ſhall arrive at ripe age, and enter upon the full poſſeſſion of the inheritance! O that I could ſend out faith and hope, theſe two faithful ſpies, to ſurvey the promiſed land, or at leaſt to viſit the borders of my elder brother's country! What an encouraging report would they bring back! My glorious Lord is gone, he hath left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends have, many of them, arrived there alſo. How great is the difference betwixt my ſtate and theirs! I am groaning out my complaints, but they are ſinging God's praiſe: I am in darkneſs, and cannot ſee God; but they are in light, and ſee him face to face. O my Lord, ſhall I ſtay behind, when they are gone? Should I be ſatisfied to wander in the wilderneſs, far diſtant from my Father and my God, when they are triumphing above, dividing the

ſpoil? No; I will look ſtill after them with a ſtedfaſt eye, and cry, O Lord, how long? I will wait now in hope, yea, rejoice in the forethoughts of the day, when my minority ſhall be expired, my pilgrimage finiſhed, my baniſhment over, that I may get home to my country and friends above.

What though my days be dark and gloomy now, my winter be ſharp and ſtormy? Why, it is but ſhort, and near over; the eternal ſummer approacheth. The long day, the high ſun, and the fair garden of my well-beloved, above theſe viſible heavens, will quickly make amends for all. Let me get up by faith, and viſit the new land, view the fair city, and behold the white throne, and the Lamb that ſits thereon, that I may rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Shall many of the heirs of wrath go ſinging and rejoicing to hell, and will an heir of God go drooping and ſorrowing to heaven? Oh, let me not, by my behaviour on a death-bed, bring up a bad report upon Chriſt's good way, and the land which he hath purchaſed.

Have I ſuch great and precious promiſes left me, and ſhall I not live and feed upon them in the time of my need? Shall I not truſt the word of him that is faithful and true? Hath he not ſaid to me, "When thou paſſeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee: when thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flames kindle upon thee?" When thy diſciples were ſore toſſed with winds and waves, thou cameſt to them in the fourth watch of the night, walking on the waters; and when their fears were increaſed, thou ſaidſt, "It is I, be not afraid." Thou rebukedſt the winds, and there preſently followed a great calm. My Redeemer's compaſſions continue: his bowels are not ſhut up this day, more than in the days of his fleſh. "Jeſus Chriſt is the ſame to-day, yeſterday, and for ever."

Ah! I have too little improven my acquaintance with precious Chriſt, in the day of my life! How ready am I to miſken and miſtake him, when he changeth his diſpenſations towards me! Though I have been long at Chriſt's ſchool, what ſmall proficiency have I made in the work and myſtery of faith? How little have I learned to believe in the dark, and do drop an anchor at midnight upon the rock of ages, and to look out for the dawning of the day?

Surely the day ſhall break, and the ſhadows flee away! My King cometh, my Well-beloved is on his way! He hath ſent his letter before him, to warn me of it, ſaying, "Behold I come quickly." O that, like the cold and wearied night-watch, I may be looking out for the appearing of the morning-ſtar, and the breaking of the eaſtern ſky; and may be ſtill crying, "Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus! come quickly!"

Thou haſt ſaid, "Light is ſown for the righteous, and gladneſs for all the upright in heart." Surely God's ſeed ſhall not lie always beneath the clods; the time is at hand, when it ſhall ſpring; and joyful will the crop be at laſt. O that, like David in affliction, I could encourage myſelf in the Lord my God, and ſay, "The Lord liveth, bleſſed be my rock!" Why ſhould I droop, while my Lord liveth, and my rock ſtandeth? My hopes may die, my comforts may die, my gifts die, my riches die, my relations die, and my body die; but, good news! "The Lord liveth, bleſſed be my rock." The diſciples had a melancholy time, while Chriſt was dead, and lying in the grave; but that ſad time is over: he is now riſen, and will die no more. Nay, he hath proclaimed it, for my comfort, ſaying, "Fear not, I am the firſt and the laſt; I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold! I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death."

When my ſoul is caſt down within me, let me remember God from the land of Jordan, and the

hill Mizar; that I may reaſon myſelf out of all my fears and diſcouragements; for yet the Lord will command his loving kindneſs in the day-time, and in the night his ſong ſhall be with me, and my prayer to the God of my life. "Why then art thou caſt down, O my ſoul; and why art thou diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I will yet praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Now, when death is at hand, let not my Saviour be far off. He who remembered the dying thief, and ſpoke comfortably to him, let him now remember me when he is ſeated in his kingdom, and ſay to my ſoul, "This day thou ſhalt be with me in paradiſe." When it is abſent from the body, let it be preſent with the Lord. Let the angels now be ready to do their office, to carry my departing ſoul into Abraham's boſom. Let me now depart, that I may be with Chriſt; yea, be for ever with the Lord, that I may ſee his face. Let me dwell there, where they need no candle, nor light of the ſun for ever! where God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow nor crying.

Father, into thy hands I commit my ſpirit. By the hands of him who hath redeemed it, let it be preſented to thee without ſpot or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing.

An Addition of ſome further Meditations, proper for any ſick perſon in the view of death.

THE Lord is pleaſed ſometimes to caſt men down on beds of ſickneſs, and draw the curtain betwixt the world and them, that they may take a view of their bypaſt life and future ſtate. Now it is time for me to look into my ſoul, and examine my ſtate. Oh! how many do miſs ſalvation, when they think themſelves ſure of it? They

miſtake a form of godlineſs for the power of it, and thereby deceive themſelves; thinking themſelves ſomething when they are nothing.

Some come the length as to ſhed tears, as Eſau did; profeſs fair, yea, fight for the Lord, as Saul and Jehu did; wiſh for the end of the righteous, as Balaam did; deſire God's people to pray for them, as Pharaoh and Simon Magus did; walk ſoftly, and mourn for fear of judgments, as Ahab did; joy in goſpel-ordinances and reform in many things, as Herod did; prophecy and ſpeak well of Chriſt, as Caiaphas and Judas did; be convinced and tremble at hearing a ſermon, as Felix did; yea, taſte the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, as apoſtates have done; and yet, for all theſe attainments, remain ſtrangers to the ſaving work of the Spirit on the heart.

O that the conſideration of hypocrite's attainments might alarm me out of my ſecurity, and make me reſtleſs till I find the diſtinguiſhing marks of true grace and ſincere faith in my ſoul! O that I could ſay, there is a principle in me, that will not ſuffer me to build on any foundation in the world but Chriſt and his righteouſneſs; that makes me content with Chriſt, with all his offices, with all his precepts and with his very croſs for his ſake? Doth the love of Chriſt keep me back from ſin, more than the law or fear of hell? Have I aimed at God's honour in all my actions, civil, natural and religious? Am I humble and denied to my own will, wit, credit, eaſe, honour, and all the enjoyments of the world? Am I acquainted with the throne of grace, and deſirous to keep up a conſtant correſpondence with it? O let me not reſt till I perceive theſe things in my ſoul which accompany ſalvation.

O how comfortable would it be to me now, if I could ſay, with good Hezekiah in his ſickneſs, "Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked be-

fore thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy ſight?" O that I could pray, and ſay, with Jeſus my Saviour, when in the view of death, "Father, I have glorified thee on earth; I have finiſhed the work which thou gaveſt me to do: And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own ſelf, with the glory which thou haſt ordained for me before the world was?"

Alas, Lord, I muſt confeſs my iniquities have gone up above mine head; my miſpent time, my unfruitfulneſs under the means of grace, and waterings of ordinances, may cauſe me to cry out, Woe is me for the leanneſs of my ſoul, and barrenneſs of my heart? I have been an empty vine, bringing forth fruit only for myſelf. I have hid my Lord's money, and therefore deſerve the doom of the wicked and ſlothful ſervant. But my relief is in my Surety's righteouſneſs. Bleſſed be the Lord, who hath ſent his Son to bleſs theſe who by nature lie under the curſe, and to intercede for theſe who cannot ſpeak for themſelves. O how ſuitable is he to my ſoul's caſe! I have indeed a multitude of ſins, but he hath a multitude of tender mercies; I have deep and heinous guilt, but he hath a deep fountain for waſhing it out; I am ſold under ſin, but he hath a ranſom to buy me back again; my ſore is broad, but his plaiſter is anſwerable; my wound is great, but his balm is excellent. Surely it is my wiſdom to go to Chriſt with all my grievances, and always to lie and cry at my Redeemer's door.

O that now, when the ſun of my life is ſetting, that the bleſſed Sun of righteouſneſs may ariſe and ſhine upon my ſoul? Goodneſs and mercy hath followed me while I lived; O that Chriſt and glory may meet me when I die! I muſt acknowledge thy goodneſs; were this the laſt hour I had to live, and this the laſt word I had to ſpeak in the world, I behoved to ſay, Lord, thou haſt been a merciful and gracious

God to me. My whole life hath been a continued tract of mercy; Lord, crown the end of it with mercy alſo. Surely the ſea is not ſo full of water, nor the ſun ſo full of light, as thou art full of grace and mercy. O let not my ſins ſtop the current of thy tender mercies at this time. Lord, drown all my ſins in the ſea of Chriſt's blood, that my ſoul may not be ſunk by them in the ocean of divine wrath. Lord Jeſus, embrace my periſhing ſoul in thy arms: Let thy croſs be my ſecurity, and thy wounds my refuge.

O thou who heareſt the young ravens which cry, be not ſilent to me at this time, leſt, if thou be ſilent to me, I be like them that go down to the pit.

Lord, I am now called to the work I never did, give me the ſtrength I never had. Surely it is an important matter to die! and my eternal ſtate dependeth upon dying aright! What I do amiſs in my life one day, I may amend it in the next; but not ſo here; I can die but once: if I mar in this piece of work, I cannot come back to mend it again; if I forget any thing neceſſary for my journey, I cannot return to fetch it. Oh, a wrong ſtep in going out of this life is highly dangerous: in one reſpect, it is like the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt, and can never be forgiven; for I cannot come back to mourn for it. Of all the buſineſs I ever undertook, I have moſt need to take care of my dying.

Oh, is death coming to take down this earthly tabernacle, and to put the one half of me in the dark grave, and the other half of me in heaven or in hell; and ſhall I give ſleep to mine eyes, or ſlumber to mine eye-lids, till I find myſelf in that caſe, that I dare look death in the face, and dare hazard my ſoul upon eternity?

O to have right impreſſions of the certainty of death, and the uncertainty of life! What is my life but a vapour, a ſand-glaſs of ſixty or ſeventy years,

which will ſoon run out! Eternity and a judgment-ſeat are now hard upon me! The blaſt of the laſt trumpet is at hand! There will ſhortly be a proclamation by one ſtanding in the clouds, "That time ſhall be no more!" The world looks big in men's eyes, in the time of health; but when the eye-ſtrings break, the blood runs cold, and the impriſoned ſoul looks out at the windows of the clay-houſe, ready to leap out into eternity, can the world give any ſatisfaction? No, no; a lamp full of oil will be valued then more than a houſe full of gold. The fineſt things on earth will then appear nothing but a piece of painted duſt and gilded clay. How gladly would the greateſt worldling, then, give all his gold and ſilver, riches and honours, for one ſight of Chriſt's fair face, one ſmile of his countenance? O wherefore ſhould men in health neglect the market of grace, and ſlight the pearl of great price? Why ſhould they ſpend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which ſatisfieth not?

Lord, ſave me from the hypocrite's caſe at death, whoſe candle of profeſſion and of hope burns and blazes fair all the way with him, but goeth out in the dark trance of death; and there he ſtumbles and falls, and ſhall riſe no more. O that my profeſſion and hope may be of God's creating? If God light my candle, then ſhall my feet be enlightened through the dark valley, and neither death nor hell ſhall be able to put it out.

Lord, ſubdue ſin in me, and let it be continually dying now, that it may certainly be dead before me. God forbid that my ſins ſhould ſurvive me!

O that, when the ſtroke of death diſſolves my body, my ſoul may eſcape as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowler, and may aſcend to the heavenly regions to enjoy God himſelf.

O let me look through the gates of mortality, and long for the jayler's coming to ſet me at li-

berty. God help me to overcome the love of life, and fears of death. If my neighbour lend me any thing, I pay it again with thanks; and ſhall I not reſtore my life to God with thanks, who hath been pleaſed to lend me it ſo long? Ariſe, and let me depart, for this is not my reſt; heaven is my home, Lord, bring me to it: the joys of it are too great to enter into me! O make me fit to enter into them.

While I lie on a ſick-bed, Lord, help me to patience in my ſickneſs without murmuring.

How willingly would the damned in hell endure my pains a thouſand years, if they had any hopes of being ſaved at laſt! Bleſſed be God, that my ſickneſs is not in hell, that my pains are not eternal.

O that I may look on my affliction as coming from the hand of him that is the Lord of health and of ſickneſs, of life and of death; who killeth and maketh alive; bringeth down to the grave, and raiſeth up again? That ſovereign and wiſe Lord hath determined the time when my affliction ſhall end, as well as the time when it began. Thirty-eight years were appointed the ſick man at Bethesda-pool; eighteen years the woman that Satan kept bound; twelve years to the woman with the bloody iſſue; ten days tribulation to thoſe of Smyrna: three days plague to David. The number of the godly man's tears is regiſtered in God's book; yea, the hairs of his head are numbered.

When David got his choice of his own chaſtiſements, he choſe rather to be corrected by the hand of God, than by any other means, ſaying, "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord, for his mercies are great." I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it. Glory to God, that I am fallen into his merciful hand. Hath God appointed that man's coming into the world ſhall be attended with pain and crying, and his going out of it with grief and trouble; and ſhall I quarrel at it? No,

I deſire humbly to underly the correction of mine iniquity, and to bear the indignation of the Lord, becauſe I have ſinned againſt him. O that the ſickneſs of my body may be a means of health to my ſoul! May I be chaſtened of the Lord, ſo that I may not be condemned with the world.

It is good for the believer that he is afflicted. Why? It ſprings from divine love, and it works for his ſoul's good. Affliction is a ſeal of his adoption, and no ſign of reprobation. The pureſt gold is oftеſt tried, the ſweeteſt grape is hardeſt preſſed, and the trueſt Chriſtian is heavieſt croſſed. But O how ſoon will the Chriſtian forget all his groans, when he comes to heaven! As ſoon as Stephen ſaw Chriſt, though at a diſtance, he forgot all his wounds and bruiſes; he minded no more the terrors of the ſtones about his ears, but ſweetly yielded his ſoul into his Redeemer's hands.

I read of many in the goſpel, that by ſickneſſes and diſeaſes were driven unto Chriſt, who, if they had enjoyed health and proſperity, would have neglected, like many others, to come to him. O bleſſed is that croſs, that draweth a ſinner to Chriſt, to lay open his own miſery, and implore Chriſt's mercy. And bleſſed be that Chriſt, who never refuſeth the ſinner that cometh to him, though driven by affliction and miſery. To whom ſhall ſuch a diſtreſſed creature as I go, but to him who is the only phyſician, that can both cure my ſoul from ſin, and my body from ſickneſs?

Lord, thou never denied thy mercy to any ſinner that aſked it with a penitent heart. There were many ſorts of ſick ſinners that came to thee in the days of thy fleſh; the blind, the deaf, the lame, the lepers; theſe that were ſick of palſies, dropſies, fevers, fluxes, and were poſſeſſed with devils; and yet never one of them came crying for mercy, that went away without their errand,

were his ſin never ſo great, his diſeaſe never ſo grievous. Nay, ſo merciful is my Redeemer, that he offered and gave his mercy to many that never aſked it, being moved with the bowels of his own compaſſion, and the ſight of their miſery; ſo dealt he with the woman of Samaria, the widow of Nain, and the man that lay thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda: Oh, if he gave his mercy ſo willingly to them that did not aſk it, and was found of them that ſought him not, will he deny mercy to my ſoul that is crying for it? There is but a ſtep betwixt me and death; Lord, ſeal my pardon to me, before I go hence and be no more. O draw nigh to me, and ſave me; for my ſoul is full of trouble, and my life draweth nigh unto the grave. Thy loving-kindneſs is better than life. O make me ſure of that, and I will willingly part with this mortal life.

O thou who willeſt not that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance, be pleaſed to make uſe of the chaſtiſement of my body, as a medicine to cure my ſoul, and bring me to a true and ſincere repentance. One day is with thee as a thouſand years; O work in me in this, which may be my laſt day, whatſoever thou ſeeſt wanting in me. Enable me to preſent unto thee the ſacrifice of a broken and a contrite heart, which thou haſt promiſed not to deſpiſe. Give a true and lively faith in the bleſſed Jeſus, who is the propitiation for our ſins: He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him. O heal me by his ſtripes. Let the cry of his blood drown the clamour of my ſins. I am indeed a child of wrath, but Chriſt is the Son of thy love. O pity me for his ſake, and let my ſoul find ſanctuary in his wounds.

O Lord, the waters of affliction are come in even unto my ſoul! O let the Spirit of God move on theſe waters, that, like the pool of Bethesda, they may

cure whatever ſpiritual diſeaſes thou ſeeſt in me. O Lord, conſider my affliction, accept my tears, aſſuage my pain, increaſe my patience, and finiſh my troubles. Correct me with the chaſtiſement of a father, not with the wounds of an enemy; tho' thou take not off thy rod, Lord, take away thine anger.

Lord, the prince of this world cometh, O let him have nothing in me; but as he accuſeth, do thou abſolve. I have nothing to ſay for myſelf, but be thou my advocate, Lord; and do thou anſwer for me. I am cloathed with filthy garments, and Satan ſtands at my right hand to reſiſt me; O Lord, rebuke him, and pluck me as a brand out of the fire. Cauſe mine iniquities to paſs from me, and clothe me with the righteouſneſs of thy dear Son. I know, O Lord, that no unclean thing can enter into thy kingdom, and thou ſeeſt I am nothing but pollution, yea, my very righteouſneſs is filthy rags. O waſh me, and make me white in the blood of the Lamb, that I may be fit to ſtand before thy throne. O take me from the tents of Kedar to the manſions of light and purity. When my earthly houſe of this tabernacle is diſſolved, O let me have a building of God, an houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. O bring my ſoul out of priſon, that I may eternally give thanks unto thy name. *Amen.*

CHAP. VIII.

Containing Directions to the Friends and Neighbours of the Sick, who are themſelves in Health for the time.

WHEN the Lord ſends ſickneſs and affliction to our neighbours, we ought not to be idle and unconcerned ſpectators of his diſpenſations; but we ſhould hearken to the voice of God's rod upon others, and conſider what it is that the Lord is calling for at our hands. The following directions may be uſeful to thoſe that are in health.

DIRECT. I. *Be very thankful to God for the great mercy of health and ſtrength, and improve it to his glory.*

SURELY a healthful perſon hath ſtill great cauſe to be a thankful perſon. Health is a mercy that doth ſeaſon and ſweeten every other temporal mercy; without it the greateſt wealth and honours, nay, a king's crown, can give no ſatisfaction. It is far more eligible to be a healthy beggar than a ſickly king. What comfort could it afford us under toſſing ſickneſs and torturing pains, to have the greateſt heaps of money to look to, or thouſands coming to pay us homage? Alas! for our unthankfulneſs to him who is the God of our health! How little do we prize his goodneſs, in continuing with us ſuch a long tract of health and ſtrength, together with the uſe of our reaſon and ſenſes, when many others are deprived of them. Surely God were righteous, ſhould he teach us to value the worth of theſe mercies by the want of them.

Let us conſider how many miſerable perſons there are in the world, and who it is that maketh us to differ from them; how many diſeaſed, diſtracted, deformed, lame, blind, deaf, and dumb people there are; and how eaſy it had been for God to have put us in their condition, and them in ours. The difference is not owing to any thing in us: their ſins are not greater than ours. Had we a due ſenſe of our ſins and ill-deſervings, we would acknowledge ourſelves unworthy of the leaſt of all God's mercies, we would reckon every common mercy a ſpecial bleſſing, and an unmerited favour to us. Again, let us take a view of the fainting ſickneſs, racking pains, and reſtleſs nights of others. Let us look upon our ſick friends ſweating and burning under fevers, let us hear them groaning and moaning under ſtrong

pain. Their ſoul abhors all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death. Sometimes we ſee them panting and fainting, and not able to ſpeak a word to us. And what is the language of all this to us? Is it not, that we ſhould thankfully adore our gracious God, and bleſs and magnify him, for his diſtinguiſhing goodneſs to us? Oh! how much are we bound to the Lord, that it is not ſo with us as with others! While weariſome nights are appointed to them, and their bones are full of toſſing; all the comforts of this life are taſteleſs to them, their friends are weeping about them, but cannot help them: 'It is far otherwiſe with me (may you ſay) my mercies and relations are comfortable and helpful to me, I reliſh my food, my bed gives me eaſe, my ſleep is refreſhing: I have freedom to read and pray, meditate, and attend the public ordinances. Praiſe the Lord, O my ſoul; and all that is within me, bleſs his holy name. Forget not this benefit of health, that is the chief of all my outward bleſſings. Some would part with all their worldly wealth, to have ſo much bodily health as I have. Long have I undervalued and abuſed this choice mercy of health: O that I could mourn for my neglect, and reſolve in God's ſtrength to improve my remaining health, for the praiſe and ſervice of that merciful God who is the author and preſerver of it! Let me ſpend and be ſpent for God, that gives me all my health and ſtrength for his glory. Let me abhor the ingratitude of thoſe who employ the health which God giveth, in the ſervice of his enemies; and make a ſacrifice of it to the devil, the world, and the fleſh. O what prodigious folly are theſe guilty of, who, for ſatisfying their ſenſual appetite do often deprive themſelves of health, which is, in itſelf, a thouſand times of more value than all their brutiſh pleaſures! God help me to prize this mercy, that can never be prized enough.'

DIRECT. II. *Make conſcience of viſiting your Sick Friends and Neighbours, believing that it is your duty and intereſt ſo to do.*

VISITING of the ſick is not only the duty of the miniſters of Chriſt, but likewiſe of all the members of Chriſt; for we are all enjoined to remember them that are in adverſity, and to ſympathize with the afflicted, as being ourſelves alſo in the body. "To him that is afflicted, pity ſhould be ſhewn by his friends," ſaith Job. And our Lord gives it as a character of thoſe whom he will own and acquit at the great day, Mat. xxv. 36. "I was ſick, and ye viſited me." This is the way to be like him, who is the Father of mercies, and whoſe "ſoul was grieved for the miſeries of Iſrael," Judg. x. 16. We read how tenderly David ſympathized with his enemies when they were ſick, Pſ. xxxv. 13, 14. and much more ought we to viſit and ſympathize with our ſick friends. To viſit the proſperous and healthy, is an act of courteſy and civility, but to viſit the ſick and afflicted, is an act of charity and Chriſtianity.

And as it is your duty, ſo it is your intereſt and advantage to viſit the ſick. The wiſe man tells you, Eccleſ. vii. 2. "It is better to go to the houſe of mourning, than to the houſe of feaſting." King Joaſh went to ſee Eliſha in his ſickneſs, and wept over him: and he loſt nothing by ſo doing, 2 Kings xiii. 14. for he obtained thereby three famous victories over the Syrians. Tho' it be not warrantable to enquire at the dead, Deut. xviii. 11. yet we may learn ſome wholeſome leſſons from the dying, and even tho' they be ſpeechleſs. As for inſtance, we may hereby be inſtructed how to prize health, mind our own frailty, and provide for the time of ſickneſs. When we behold their ſtrength languiſhing, their tongue faultering, their eyes falling, their countenance pale; we ſhould think with ourſelves,

'This will be my caſe ere long; the next arrow that death ſhoots, may be levelled at me: how much is it my concern to prepare for it?' Alſo we may think, what a bitter thing ſin is, that it is the cauſe of all theſe pains and diſtreſſes; and how mad they are who love ſin, and take pleaſure in it. We may ſee likewiſe the great folly of courting and truſting the world, which leaves the ſick and dying man in the time of his greateſt extremity. And we may obſerve, how happy the man is, that hath an intereſt in Chriſt, the peace of a good conſcience, and a well grounded hope of heaven, to yield ſupport and confidence to him under his ſtrugglings with ſickneſs and death. When we hear the dying man's complaints of his ſins, and his lamenting his neglect of duty, and miſpending of precious time, we may learn repentance and reformation. When we obſerve their profeſſions of love to Chriſt, and their hope in him to the laſt, it doth contribute to the quickening and ſtrengthening of our faith. A right ſight of dying perſons, is a good mean to increaſe the ſpirit of grace and ſupplication in us. We may fitly allude here to the anſwer which Elijah gave to Eliſha, when he ſought a double portion of his ſpirit, 2 Kings ii. 10. "If thou ſeeſt me when I am taken from thee, it ſhall be ſo unto thee." A double portion of the Spirit ſhall be the allowance of theſe who make conſcience of duty.

DIRECT. III. *Let the Friends of the Sick, and thoſe who viſit them, deal faithfully with them about their ſouls.*

CONSIDER, this may be the laſt opportunity you may have of doing any thing for your friend's ſoul. If he die, he is fixed in his everlaſting ſtate, ſo that all advices and counſels then will be fruitleſs. It is now, or never, you muſt exert your

ſelf for your friend's advantage: there is no knowledge nor wiſdom in the grave, to which he is going: God's loving-kindneſs cannot be declared in the grave, nor his faithfulneſs in deſtruction," Pſal. lxxxviii. 11. Now is the proper time for doing good to your neighbour's ſoul. When affliction opens the ear to diſcipline, be careful to drop in wholeſome inſtruction into it; and, when the heart is made tender by ſickneſs, it is a fit ſeaſon for good counſel to make impreſſions on it. Let the opportunity then be improven with faithfulneſs and prudence. And, in order thereto, obſerve the following advices.

I. Labour to know the ſick man's ſpiritual condition, that your applications may be ſuitable thereunto. The knowledge of the diſeaſe is previouſly requiſite unto the cure; as the miſtake of a phyſician about a man's diſeaſe, may be as dangerous as the diſeaſe itſelf; ſo here it is highly dangerous to miſtake the caſe of the ſick man's ſoul; for then lenitives may be applied, when corroſives are needful; promiſes may be adminiſtered, when threatenings are more proper.

II. Beware of flattering the ſick with vain hopes of life, when he is more likely to die; leſt he be thereby tempted to delay or ſlacken his preparation for another world. It is fit that plainneſs be uſed with reſpect to his danger, that he may be quickened to his work.

III. The ſick perſon is to be admoniſhed and told, that ſickneſs comes not by chance, nor by ſecond cauſes merely; but by the wiſe direction and ſpecial providence of God: that ſometimes God ſmites out of diſpleaſure for ſin, and for the ſinner's correction and amendment; and ſometimes for the trial and exerciſe of his people's graces; that the ſharpeſt afflictions ſhall work together for good to them that love God, and are rightly exer-

ciſed under God's hand; that it is a great mercy to a ſinner, when God by his rod gives him warning and ſpace to repent, and flee to the blood of ſprinkling, and to cry to God for pardon; and doth not ſnatch him out of the world by a ſudden death. Upon which account the voice of the rod ſhould be carefully hearkened to, and thankfully obeyed.

IV. If the ſick perſon be ignorant, he is to be catechiſed and inſtructed in the principles of religion, eſpecially concerning his faith and repentance, and his uptaking of the covenant of grace, and the method of pardon and ſalvation through the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, apprehended by faith. And it may be proper to demand his aſſent to ſome of the fundamental truths of Chriſtianity, or his anſwer to ſuch queſtions as theſe: *1ſt*, Do you believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, one God in three perſons, the maker and governor of the world? *2dly*, Do you believe that Jeſus Chriſt, who aſſumed our nature, obeyed the law, died on the croſs, roſe from the dead, and aſcended to heaven, is the eternal Son of God, and the only Saviour of ſinners? *3dly*, Are you ſenſible that you are a loſt ſinner by Adam's fall, and beſides that, guilty of innumerable actual ſins; and that you have broken God's holy commandments in thoughts, words and deeds, and, for ſo doing, do deſerve God's wrath, both in this life, and that which is to come?—*4thly*, Are you truly grieved and ſorry for breaking God's law, neglecting his worſhip, miſpending your time, and purſuing the vanities of the world? And would you do as you have done, or live otherwiſe if you were to begin your life again? *5thly*, How do you think to get your guilt removed, your ſins pardoned, and your peace made up with God? Are you deſirous from your heart to be reconciled to God, thro' Jeſus Chriſt, the bleſſed peace-maker? *6thly*, Do you heartily approve of the goſpel-method

of reconciliation, by the righteouſneſs and ſacrifice offered by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as your Surety, in your name and ſtead? And is your ſoul deſirous to chuſe and accept of Chriſt for your Mediator and Saviour in all his offices of prophet, prieſt, and king? 7*thly*, Do you renounce all confidence in any other, all dependence on your own duties and righteouſneſs, and put your whole truſt and confidence in Chriſt, and the merits of his death and blood, ſaying, Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth that I deſire beſides thee. Do you believe that there is no ſalvation in any other; and that there is no name under heaven whereby you can be ſaved, but Jeſus Chriſt only? 8*thly*, Do you deſire to be wholly renewed and ſanctified by virtue of Chriſt's blood, and to ſhew forth the reality of your faith by good works, and a holy life, for the time you have to live in the world? And, as an evidence thereof, are you willing to reſtore what you have taken wrongfully from any, and to forgive all wrongs done to you by any, and to caſt out all malice or hatred you have borne to any, and aſk forgiveneſs of any you have injured? 9*thly*, Do you believe that Chriſt is coming at the laſt day to judge all the world, both the quick and the dead, whom he ſhall then raiſe from the grave, and that your dead body ſhall riſe with the reſt? 10*thly*, Do you believe the immortality of the ſoul, and its living in a ſeparate ſtate after death; and that the ſouls of believers do immediately paſs into glory, where they ſhall be ever with the Lord?

V. In dealing with the ſick, you are to ſeparate betwixt the precious and the vile, and make a difference betwixt the converted and the unconverted. And, ſeeing different applications are requiſite, you are, according to your knowledge, to ſtudy to ſuit your counſels, admonitions, and prayers, to their ſtate and condition; not uſing the ſame words to

the ungodly as you uſe to the godly, leſt you flatter them with ill-grounded hopes that their ſtate is ſafe, while they are ſtrangers to a work of regeneration. That great truth is to be declared to all, "That unleſs a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God." O it is dangerous to ſpeak peace, where God ſpeaks war.

VI. If the ſick perſon ſeems to be ſecure, or have not a due ſenſe of his ſins, endeavours muſt be uſed to convince him of the guilt, pollution and danger of them, in order to his humiliation. Preſumptuous ſinners are not to be flattered, leſt ye betray their ſouls into eternal ruin, and ſo their blood be required at our hand. No fond love, no ſlaviſh fear, muſt keep us from telling them the hazard of their preſent ſtate. Their ſecure conſcience muſt be awakened to ſee the demerit of ſin, and the terribleneſs of the juſtice of a ſin-revenging God, before whom no Chriſtleſs impenitent ſinner can ſtand: This is neceſſary in order to a ſinner's diſcovering his loſt caſe in himſelf, and his fleeing to Chriſt for refuge. It is God's method, firſt to caſt down the ſoul, before he lift it up; to plow the heart by conviction, before he caſt in the ſeed of conſolation.

VII. If the ſick perſon hath ſtudied to walk uprightly, but is at preſent diſcouraged upon account of the ſharpneſs of the rods, Satan's temptation, the guilt of ſin, fear of death, or the like; then ſuitable counſels, reſolutions and comforts, are to be tendered in order to his ſettlement and ſupport. Particularly, he may be told, that ſharp rods are nowiſe inconſiſtent with divine love; nay, frequently, they are a ſign of it: for, as ſtanding waters turn corrupt, becauſe they have no current: and theſe who are not poured from veſſel to veſſel, their taſte remains, and their ſcent is not changed; therefore God, in order to take away the ſcent of the corrupt

nature from us, is pleaſed to change us from ſtate to ſtate, by croſſes and ſickneſs, to ſalvation. And as Noah's ark, the higher it was toſſed with the flood, the nearer it mounted towards heaven; ſo the ſanctified ſoul, the more it is exerciſed with affliction, the nearer it is lifted towards God. Again, it is proper to ſet before him the freeneſs and fulneſs of God's grace; the ſufficiency of righteouſneſs in Chriſt, and his rich and gracious offers in the goſpel, by which we are aſſured, that all who repent and believe with all their heart in God's mercy thro' Chriſt, renouncing their own righteouſneſs, ſhall not periſh in their ſins, but have life and ſalvation in him; and that believers in Chriſt are aſſured of victory over Satan, death and all their enemies, becauſe Chriſt, their head, hath, by his croſs conquered the devil, unſtinged death, triumphed over the grave and obtained victory for all his members: ſo that neither life nor death, principalities nor powers ſhall be able to ſeparate them from God's love in Chriſt.

VIII. If a ſick man be ſo tempted and troubled in conſcience, that he is in hazard of deſpairing of God's mercy; it is neceſſary to inform him of the greatneſs and infiniteneſs of God's mercy, that the moſt notorious ſinners have been pardoned and ſaved by it, and it is ſtill offered in the goſpel to the vileſt of ſinners. Though God foreſaw all the ſins which the world would commit, yet theſe did not hinder him from loving the world ſo, that he gave his only begotten Son to death, to ſave as many as would believe and repent; ſo that the ſins of one man can never hinder God from loving his ſoul, and forgiving his ſins, when he ſincerely deſires to repent and believe. The cry of the moſt grievous ſins that are recorded (ſuch as theſe of Sodom) could never reach higher than unto heaven, Gen. xix. 13. But David aſſures us, Pſal. cviii. 4. that the mercy of God is great, and reaches higher than the heavens,

ſo that it overtoppeth the greateſt of all our ſins. If the mercy of God be greater than all his works, it muſt ſurely be greater than all our ſins.

Again, lay before him the infinite virtue of Chriſt's blood. Why? It is not the blood of a mere man, but the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. And are there any ſins ſo great, or guilt ſo heinous, but the blood of God can waſh away? This was godly Cranmer's ſupport that day he ſuffered martyrdom, when his ſin of renouncing the Proteſtant doctrine ſtared him in the face: 'Surely (ſaid he) God was made fleſh and ſhed his blood, not for leſſer ſins only, but for great ſins alſo.' He was ſadly diſcouraged, and wept abundantly till he eyed this meritorious blood, and then he took heart and died with courage. O! this price was ſo great, that it could have merited pardon for the ſins of all the devils in hell, as well as of all the men on earth, tho' every one of them had been red as crimſon. Yea the leaſt drop of this blood is of more merit to procure the mercy of God for our ſalvation, than all our ſins can be of force to provoke the wrath of God for our damnation. Why? The greateſt of our ſins are but the ſins of a man, but the leaſt drop of Chriſt's blood is the blood of God.

Moreover, let him be put in mind of the willingneſs and readineſs of our Redeemer to receive all ſinners that came to him in the days of his fleſh, tho' driven to him by ſickneſs and affliction; ſo that he never put any of them away without their errand, that came crying for mercy. Nay, he many times ſought out objects of his mercy, that were not thinking of coming to him, as ſhewed before. Obſerve the gentleneſs of our Lord's carriage to Judas himſelf, in calling him friend, after his moſt treacherous dealing, Matth. xxvi. 50. "Friend (ſaid he) wherefore art thou come?" Had wretched Judas laid hold on the word friend, out of the mouth of Chriſt, as Benhadad did the word brother,

from the mouth of Ahab, doubtleſs Judas ſhould have found the God of Iſrael more merciful than Benhadad found the king of Iſrael.

Laſtly, Let him conſider, that to deſpair of God's mercy, caſts the greateſt diſhonour upon the divine Majeſty, and is a ſin more heinous than all the ſins which we have before committed: Why? It doth charge the great God as guilty of perjury, who hath ſolemnly ſworn, that he deſires not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he ſhould repent and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. God was more diſpleaſed with Cain for deſpairing of his mercy, than for murdering his brother; and with Judas for hanging himſelf, than for betraying his Maſter. Why? Becauſe that by their deſpair they would make the ſins of mortal men gaeater than the infinite mercy of the eternal God.

DIRECT. IV. *Be earneſt in prayer to God for your Friends when Sick or Dying. Pray with them and for them.*

FREQUENTLY ſick perſons are ſo diſquieted with pain and trouble, that they are out of caſe to pray for themſelves, and therefore they have the more need of the prayers of others. David faſted and prayed for his enemies, when they were ſick, Pſal. xxx. 13. much more ought we to pray for our friends in that caſe. Never did they need our prayers ſo much, as when they are called to enter upon an unchangeable condition, to go to their long home, even that place wherein they muſt abide for ever. Now they are in the land of prayer, and it is now or never that you muſt pray and beg mercy for them. When their life is gone, they go from the land of prayer, and are fixed in that place whence they ſhall never remove; then all your prayers and cries for them will be in vain. If your friend be a ſtranger to Chriſt, he is on the brink of hell, and

knows it not, and will you not cry to God to open his eyes, and ſave him from falling into that devouring pit, out of which there is no redemption? You would be willing to ſit up a whole night for the relief of his body; and will you not ſpend a part of a night for the good of his ſoul, that is a thouſand times more valuable? Now the queſtion is, whether this precious ſoul ſhould be Chriſt's or the devil's for ever? And when will you wreſtle for your friend, if you do it not now?—If the ſick perſon be a child of God, you may pray for him with the more comfort, and expectation to be heard. You may, in that caſe, ſend the ſame meſſage by prayer to Chriſt, that the ſiſter of ſick Lazarus did, John xi. 3. "Lord, behold he whom thou loveſt is ſick." Lord, pity him, comfort him, abate his diſtemper, and relieve him from it, if it be thy will; if not, grant him thy gracious preſence and ſafe conduct thro' the Jordan of death, and a happy landing in the Canaan of glory.

We are told that the prayers of the righteous, in ſuch caſes, do avail much, James v. 16. and this, to encourage us to pray one for another. Whatever be the ſick perſon's condition, ſuch confeſſions and petitions as theſe following may be made uſe of in prayer for him.

Petitions for the Sick.

Lord, thou firſt breathedſt into man the breath of life; and when thou takeſt away that breath, he dies and returns again to his duſt. May we be duly ſenſible of our dependence on thee for all that we enjoy. We acknowledge, that our great abuſe of the many days of health and welfare thou affordeſt us, do juſtly deſerve the viſitation of ſickneſs and diſeaſes. Wo's us, we lie under a burden of ſin, both original and actual; we are all children of wrath by nature, and under the curſe of a broken law; and all other miſeries, temporal and ſpiritual,

diſtempers, pains, death, and hell itſelf, are the iſſues thereof. Be merciful to the ſick perſon under thy hand; diſcover to him his ſins, and the cauſe why thou contendeſt with him. Make him ſee that he is loſt in himſelf, and wholly unable to ſatisfy the demands of offended juſtice; and do thou reveal Chriſt to his ſoul for righteouſneſs and life. O give him the Holy Spirit, to create and ſtrengthen faith, that he may lay hold on Chriſt as offered in the goſpel; work in him the grace of true repentance. Enable him to ſearch his heart, and try his ways ſo as he may diſcover every accurſed thing, every Achan in the camp, that hath provoked the Lord againſt him. When thou putteſt him in the furnace, be pleaſed to ſtand by it, and overſee the metal whilſt it is melting in it. Try him as ſilver is tried, and bring him out purified, and let him loſe nothing in this furnace but his droſs. Remove his ſins from thy preſence as far as eaſt is from the weſt, that they may never trouble his conſcience, nor riſe in judgment againſt his ſoul. However bitter the cup may be, let it be medicinal to cure all the diſeaſes of his ſoul. O that theſe afflictions, which are but for a moment, may work for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, through Jeſus Chriſt the purchaſer.

Look down from heaven the habitation of thy holineſs, behold his affliction and his pain, and forgive all his ſin. Shew ſuch pity to him as a father doth to his child, and lay no more upon him than he is able to bear. Lord, give patience and ſtrength anſwerable to the burden of trouble thou haſt laid on him. In time of his weakneſs uphold him by thy ſtrength. Relieve his wants out of thy infinite fulneſs. Lord, thou knoweſt his frame, and remembereſt that he is duſt; ſave him from extremity of trouble, either abate his pain, or increaſe his patience to endure what thou meaſureſt out to

him. Give him the evidences of all the graces of thy Spirit. Arm and defend him againſt all the ſuggeſtions and temptations of Satan. Take his heart wholly off the world, and ſet his affections on things above. Lord, make uſe of this chaſtiſement of his body as a medicine to cure his ſoul, by drawing his ſoul, that is ſick of ſin, to thyſelf. O enable him, in a penitent believing manner, to come by repentance to Chriſt, his ſoul-phyſician, to get it healed of all its maladies. Sanctify his ſickneſs, and let the fruit of it be to purge away his ſin.

If God ſhall be pleaſed to add to his days, bleſs all means of his recovery. Remove the diſeaſe; renew his ſtrength both outward and inward; heal his ſoul as well as his body. And enable him to walk tenderly before God, and carefully to remember and perform ſuch vows and promiſes of obedience as men are apt to make in time of ſickneſs.

If God hath determined to finiſh his days by the preſent viſitation; let him find ſuch evidence of the pardon of his ſins, of his intereſt in Chriſt, and eternal life, as may cauſe his inward man to be renewed, while his outward man decayeth; that he may meet death without fear, caſt himſelf wholly on Chriſt, without doubting, and deſire to be diſſolved, that he may for ever be with Jeſus Chriſt.—Lord, make his laſt works better than his firſt, and the day of his death better than the day of his birth.—Make his laſt words his beſt words, his laſt thoughts his beſt thoughts, and his laſt hour his beſt hour. O let him die the death of the righteous, and let his laſt end be like his. Let the eyes of his ſoul be opened to ſee his ſins and his Saviour, before the eyes of his body be ſhut by death. Take away the ſting of death, the guilt of ſin, that he may walk thro' the valley of the ſhadow of death, and fear no evil. Open thou his lips, that his mouth may ſhew forth thy praiſe, before he go to the place of ſilence. And

when his ſtrength doth fail, and his tongue is not able to utter words, let the blood of Chriſt ſpeak for him in heaven. And let thy Holy Spirit within him, make requeſts for him, with ſighs and groans that cannot be uttered. When the ſight of his eyes doth fail him, let the eyes of his faith be ſtrengthened, that his ſoul (with Stephen at his death) may behold Jeſus Chriſt in heaven, ready to receive him. Lord, ſtand by him in his laſt conflict with his enemies, Satan and death, that he may overcome both, and be more than a conqueror thro' Chriſt that hath loved him. Into thy hands we commend his ſpirit.

Lord, teach us who do ſurvive, by this and other like daily ſpectacles of our mortality, to ſee how frail and uncertain our condition is, and ſo to number our days, that we may ſeriouſly apply our hearts to heavenly wiſdom, thro' Jeſus Chriſt. *Amen.*

DIRECT. V. *Be careful to furniſh your friends with ſuitable company and ſpiritual converſe, when they are ſick or dying.*

AS worldly company and converſe are great hindrances, ſo ſpiritual company and converſe, are ſpecial helps to the ſick and dying. Now, that the friends of the ſick may prevent the one, and provide for the other, let the following advices be remembered.

1*ſt*, Mind your friends timeouſly to make their wills, and diſpatch the ſettlement of their worldly affairs, that ſo they may not be diſturbed at the laſt, nor anywiſe diverted from their main work, by thoughts or diſcourſes about the world. A mind abſtracted from the world is a moſt ſuitable diſpoſition for a dying man. You cannot carry the things of this world with you, when you go hence; and it is not fit you ſhould carry the thoughts of them.

2*dly*, Keep carnal company from them as much

as poſſible, and all theſe that would divert them by idle or worldly diſcourſe. It is both impertinent and cruel to throw in ſuch impediments in the way of thoſe that are going ſpeedily to their endleſs ſtate.

3*dly*, Do what you can to get faithful miniſters and godly Chriſtians to be much about them, who are fit to inſtruct and counſel them about their ſoul's matters, and alſo to pray with them and for them.

4*thly*, Be often minding your ſick friends of their chief work, and theſe things which belong unto their peace. Whatever be their ſtate, whether gracious or graceleſs, it is proper to be minding them, 1. Of the vanity and emptineſs of the world, that can neither give eaſe to the body, nor comfort to the ſoul, when either of them is in trouble. 2. Of the ſinfulneſs of ſin, which is the ſpring of all diſeaſes and miſeries whatſoever. 3. Of the preciouſneſs and uſefulneſs of Chriſt to a ſinner in all caſes, and eſpecially at a dying hour. 4. Of the inexpreſſible felicity of believers in Chriſt after death, &c.

Laſtly, If you think yourſelves not able to inſtruct or adviſe your ſick friends as they ſtand in need, then read ſome good book to them, that may be ſuitable to the condition of their ſouls; and if you have not a fitter at hand, read ſome chapters or directions of this book to them, as you may ſee moſt proper for them. But above all books, read to the ſick the holy Scriptures, and ſome particular chapters and Pſalms there, ſuch as the laſt three chapters of Geneſis; the laſt chapter of Deuteronomy; the 17th chapter of the firſt book of Kings; the 2d chapter of the 2d book of Kings; the 14th and 19th chapters of Job; the Pſalms of David, and particularly the 6th, 23d, 25th, 30th, 38th, 41ſt, 42d, 49th, 51ſt, 71ſt, 73d, 77th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 103d, 116th, 118th, 130th. 142d, 144th, and ſeveral other Pſalms. The 12th chapter of Eccleſiaſtes; the 30th 53d, 54th and 55th chapters of Iſaiah; the laſt three

chapters of Luke; the 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th and 20th chapters of John; the 8th chapter of the Romans; the 15th chapter of the 1ſt Corinthians; the 5th of the 2d Corinthians; the 4th of 1ſt Theſſalonians; the 11th and 12th of the Hebrews; the laſt three chapters of the Revelation, and the like.

DIRECT. VI. *Be likewiſe ſuitably concerned for the bodies of your friends, when they are ſick.*

IF you would evidence a ſuitable concern for them, then you muſt deal tenderly and compaſſionately with them in their ſickneſs; bear with their impatience and fretting, weary not of them, nor grudge at the trouble they put you to; for, ſhortly, you yourſelves may be in the like caſe, when you ſhall be as great a trouble to others, as your friends are now to you.

Again, it is neceſſary to employ phyſicians, and uſe the beſt means for the recovery of your friend's health. The means indeed muſt not be truſted to, inſtead of God, but uſed in ſubſerviency to him, who hath appointed them, and can only give ſucceſs to them. We muſt beware of Aſa's ſin, that ſought to the phyſicians, and not to the Lord. Let us neither take food nor phyſic without prayers to God for his bleſſing thereupon.

DIRECT. VII. *When the ſickneſs of your relations or Neighbours doth iſſue in death, ſtudy a Chriſtian and ſuitable behaviour under ſuch a diſpenſation.*

WHEN a parent loſeth a promiſing child, or a child loſeth a loving parent, when death deprives us of any near relation, it is a ſpeaking and trying providence; and we have much need of grace and counſel from God to carry aright under it. Let us obſerve theſe advices.

I. It is neceſſary, in ſuch a caſe, that we have

a tender ſenſe and feeling of God's afflicting hand. There are two extremes which we muſt equally avoid, viz. to make light of the death of relations, and to be exceſſively grieved on that account. God will have us neither to deſpiſe his rod, nor to faint under it, Heb. xii. 5. God is diſpleaſed with thoſe that are ſtupid and inſenſible under ſuch afflictions. Why? They deſpiſe his rod, and make light of his corrections. Hence he complains of theſe, Jer. v. 3. "I have ſmitten them, but they have not grieved." God will have us to feel his hand, to enquire into the meaning of the rod, and ſearch for theſe ſins that have provoked God to ſmite us. It is a ſign of a naughty, ſelfiſh and unchriſtian ſpirit, to be unconcerned for the death of friends; and much more is it ſo in theſe children, who have a ſecret ſatisfaction in the death of parents, becauſe of the worldly riches or liberty which they get thereby. God uſeth to follow this wicked temper with his heavy judgments even in this life.

II. Conſider, that God is calling you, by the death of others, to keep up lively and laſting impreſſions of death and eternity upon your ſpirits. God knoweth how advantageous it would be for men ſo to do; and therefore he ſets frequent ſpectacles of mortality before their eyes for this end. But ſuch is the corruption and earthlineſs of our minds, that we ſoon forget the thoughts of death. When we ſee our friends in the pangs of death, or laid in the grave, it ſtrikes us with ſome fear and concern to think, that one day this will be our own caſe: but no ſooner is the dead interred, and the grave filled up again, than all theſe ſerious thoughts begin to vaniſh, and men return to their ſins and pleaſures as before. Ah, what folly is this! Should not men always keep alive the ſerious thoughts of death and a future ſtate? Are we not always alike mortal? Are we not as liable

to death's arreſt at other times, as when examples are before our eyes?

III. When God takes away your children or relations, let it draw your hearts and affections more towards God and things above. As, when a ſhepherd taketh up in his arms a lamb of the flock, the ewe followeth him of her own accord, and will not leave him: ſo, when the great Shepherd of the ſheep taketh a child or friend from you, it ſhould cauſe you to follow after him, and deſire to be with him. But one may ſay, that is not the caſe with me; I fear the wolf hath got the ſtraying ſheep, and devoured it. Then even this ſuſpicion ſhould make you run to the good Shepherd, abide with him, and keep cloſe by the footſteps of the flock, and beware of ſtraying in theſe paths wherein deſtroyers go. When God taketh from you theſe relations whom you dearly loved, he calls you to take your love off the fading creature, and ſet it on the eternal Creator; when the weak branch is lopt off, then claſp to the body of the tree, which will not fail you.

IV. In ſuch trials, ſtudy a humble and patient ſubmiſſion to the will of God, who, in his ſovereign wiſdom and pleaſure, hath taken your child or friend from you. Remember who hath done it, even he, who gave all men their lives, and hath the abſolute power and right to diſpoſe of men's lives, as he thinks beſt. If your fellow-creature do any thing that diſpleaſeth you, you may both aſk who did it, and why he did ſo? But, when God doth any thing to you, you muſt remember he is the Potter, and you are the clay; and that he may make or mar his clay-veſſels, yea, break them in pieces at his pleaſure; and "there is none that can ſtay his hand, or ſay to him, What doſt thou?—Be ſtill and know that I am God," Pſal. xlvi. 10. The maſter of a family gathers at his pleaſure the flowers

and fruits of his garden: ſometimes he cuts off the buds, ſometimes he ſuffers them to bloſſom; ſometimes he gathers the green fruit, ſometimes he ſtays till they be ripe; and every body thinks he may do with his own what he pleaſeth: and ſhall not the almighty God have liberty much more to diſpoſe of all that grows in his own territories at his pleaſure? The maſter of the family hath not created the trees and plants of his garden; but God hath made and faſhioned all the children of men with his almighty hand.

It is the ſenſe of this ſovereign right and dominion of God over his creatures, that hath made his people to be ſilent under the greateſt loſſes. Hence Aaron, when he loſt his two ſons by a ſudden and extraordinary ſtroke, it is ſaid of him, Lev. x. 3. "And Aaron held his peace." He opened not his mouth, becauſe it was a ſovereign God that did it. So holy Job, when he loſt all his children by one blow, patiently ſubmits to his abſolute Lord, Job i. 12. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord." Job knew that God's relation to them was far nearer than his, and his right to diſpoſe of them was indiſputable. It was a holy and excellent ſpeech of that honourable perſon, lord Dupleſſis, at the death of his only ſon; 'I could not have born this from a man, but I can from God."

V. Guard againſt immoderate grief and exceſſive ſorrow for the death of children or near relations; for this is ſinful and offenſive to God. Now, grief is ſinful and immoderate, when it makes you grudge at God's diſpenſation, murmur at his will, turn unthankful to him for the mercies you enjoy, overlook all bypaſt favours, and lament a temporal more than a ſpiritual loſs. Alas! there are many who can bewail a dead friend far

more than a dead heart, and the loſs of a child more than the loſs of God's countenance. Now, for preventing this exceſſive ſorrow, conſider theſe things,

1*ſt*, If you be Chriſtleſs and impenitent, you have reaſon to bleſs God that the ſtroke was not at your own life, for then you had been eternally miſerable and without hope. What is the temporal loſs of a child, to the eternal loſs of thine own ſoul? O it is far better to be childleſs and friendleſs on earth, than to be hopeleſs and remedileſs in hell.

2*dly*, Conſider how little ground you have to complain of any loſs or ſtroke you meet with on earth. 1. If you eye God's ſovereignty and power over you, you have cauſe to be thankful that he hath not annihilated you and your relations both, long ere now; ſeeing he hath as full a dominion to reduce you to nothing, as to bring you from nothing. Though God ſhould daſh us againſt the walls, as a potter doth his veſſel, no man could have reaſon to ſay, What doſt thou? or, Why doſt thou uſe me ſo? Jer. xviii. 6. "O houſe of Iſrael, cannot I do with you as this potter? ſaith the Lord." Nay, he hath a greater right to deal ſo with us than a potter with his veſſel; for God hath contributed all to his creature that it hath, but the potter never made the clay which is the ſubſtance of the veſſel, nor the water that is needful to make it tractable. All that the potter doth, is only to mould the clay into ſuch a ſhape; beſides, the potter's body is no better than the clay he makes his veſſel of; nay, perhaps, that very clay might once have been ſome part of the body of a man as good as the potter himſelf. Now, ſhall the potter have ſuch abſolute power over that which is ſo near and like to him, and ſhall not God have it over that which is infinitely diſtant from him? That word, Dan. iv. 34, 35. "The Moſt High doth according

to his will," is enough to ſilence the murmurings of all men under ſtrokes and loſſes.

2. If you eye the hand of God, as moſt juſt and righteous, in what you have met with, you have no ground to complain: "Have you not procured all this to yourſelf?" Is not God moſt juſt in all that hath come upon you? Nay, if you conſider your ſins, and God's abſolute dominion over you, you muſt own he might have dealt with you in a ſmarter way than he hath done; inſtead of one affliction, you might have had a thouſand.

3. Look to the mercy that is mixed with the rod. It is a wonder that this great Sovereign, who is ſo provoked by us, ſhould allow us any mercy at all; and yet we receive innumerable benefits from him. Whatever be our afflictions, ſurely they are far leſs than our iniquities deſerve. Hath he caſt your child into the grave? He might juſtly have thrown your ſoul into hell. It is of the Lord's mercies you are not conſumed. Why ſhould a living man complain? A man out of the grave, and out of hell too, hath ſurely no reaſon.

4. If you compare your affliction with the trials of others of God's people, yea, and theſe ſaints who have been moſt eminent, you have no reaſon to grudge at your loſs. You have one child dead, but Aaron (who is called the ſaint of the Lord, Pſal. cvi. 16.) had two at one ſtroke; nay, Job, whom God commends above all the ſaints in his day, had all his children ſlain by one blow; and both theſe eminent ſaints had theſe loſſes by an immediate and extraordinary ſtroke from God. Some godly parents have ſeen their children live to prove ſcandals to religion, and a grief of mind to themſelves, and would have thought it a mercy if God had taken them away when young. Say not then, that there is no ſorrow like your ſorrow; for the cup which many others have drunk,

hath had more bitter ingredients in it than yours.

3*dly*, Conſider, that exceſſive grief cannot better your caſe, it may well make it worſe. If you ſtruggle and contend under God's hand, you act a fooliſh part; as a bullock unaccuſtomed to the yoke, that by his ſtruggling galls his neck, and makes the yoke the more uneaſy: or, like a bird fluttering in a net, that, inſtead of freeing, doth the more intangle itſelf. Thus, by immoderate ſorrow and fretting under the ſtroke, you ſin the more againſt God, and make your burden the more heavy.

4*thly*, Remember the tranſactions of thy ſoul with God in the day thou enteredſt into covenant with him. When thou ſaweſt thyſelf on the brink of hell, and a burden of ſin preſſing thee down, and no hope for thee but in Chriſt; then your cry was, 'None but Chriſt! take children, take relations, riches, and all things in a world from me, and give me Chriſt. I give up myſelf, and all I have, to be diſpoſed at thy pleaſure; thy will, Lord, ſhall be my will,' &c. Now, God is taking thee at thy word, and trying thy ſincerity in what thou ſaidſt and and profeſſedſt to him ſo ſolemnly. He hath diſpoſed of thy dear relation as pleaſed him: O believer, doſt thou rue the bargain? Wouldſt thou take thy word again? Where is thy covenanted ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and thy promiſed contentment with all diſpoſals?

5*thly*, Doſt thou not believe that a covenanted God is better to thee than all the friends in the world? Cannot God ſoon make up the greateſt loſs to thee, if thou turn to him by prayer, and pour out thy heart and ſorrows in his boſom? What are the world's comforts to God's comforts? A ſmile of God's face, in prayer, can ſoon ſweeten thy bitter cup, and make thee forget all thy ſorrows, Pſal. xciv. 19. 'In the multitude of my

thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my ſoul.' The author of the Fulfilling of the Scriptures tells of one Patrick Mackilwræ, an eminent ſaint in the weſt of Scotland, who having loſt his dear and only ſon, got to his cloſet, and there poured out his ſoul freely to the Lord. When he came out to his friends at length, who were waiting to comfort him, and fearing how he would take ſuch a heavy ſtroke; he returned from prayer with a chearful countenance, and told ſome of his friends, who aſked him the reaſon of his chearfulneſs, that 'he had got that in his retirement with the Lord, that, to have it afterwards renewed, he would be content to loſe a ſon every day!'

6thly, Serioufly conſider, that you are but a few days journey behind him for whom you mourn; and that you will quickly overtake him, and be with him again. This allayed David's ſorrow for his child, 2 Sam. vii. 23. "I ſhall go to him." It is our expecting to live long here, to enjoy the comfort of relations, that commonly makes us grieve ſo much for their death; for, if we looked on ourſelves as men that were to die in a few days, we would not be ſo troubled for our friends, that are gone but a little ſpace before us.

7thly, If your friends are gone to heaven, you have more reaſon to rejoice with them, than to mourn for them: ſeeing they are unſpeakably happier where they now are, than they could have been with you. It is the moſt fervent deſire and wiſh of every true Chriſtian to be in heaven; and, will you grieve, becauſe God hath taken your relation thither, where you deſire to be yourſelf above all things? As Chriſt ſaid to his diſciples before his death, John xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice becauſe I go unto the Father:" So, if your departed friend could ſpeak to you from heaven, he would ſay, 'If you loved me with

a pure ſpiritual love, you would rejoice that I am gone to my Father, where I am more happy than you can poſſibly conceive of me.'

Object. Had I ground to think that my friend is gone to heaven, it would eaſe me; but, alas! I fear it is otherwiſe.

Anſ. 1. It doth not belong to us to dive into the eternal ſtate and condition of theſe that are gone off the ſtage. Theſe ſecret things belong to God, who exerciſeth his mercy or juſtice towards ſinners according to his ſovereign will.

2. Suppoſing the worſt, you ought to ſubmit to the incontroulable ſovereignty of God, who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. He is of one mind, and who can turn him? The Lord cut off Aaron's two ſons in the very act of ſin and rebellion againſt him, and yet Aaron held his peace; and ſo ought you.

3. Whatever be the lot of others hereafter, you have reaſon to be thankful to God for his diſtinguiſhing mercy, in ſaving you from theſe flames that others fall into, and giving you good hope, through grace, of glorifying God above for ever.

DIRECT. VIII. *Let the ſickneſs and death of others be a warning to you in time of health, to make due preparation for the time of ſickneſs and of dying, which is before your hand.*

WHEN you ſee your friends and neighbours in a ſickly, weak or dying condition, the language of the diſpenſation to you that are in health is, "Prepare for ſickneſs alſo." Nay, the feeble voice of the ſick doth proclaim this warning as loudly as if they ſhould lift up their voice like a trumpet, and ſay to you, 'Remember that thou muſt lie in the ſame caſe ere long; you muſt alſo groan under pain, loſe your ſtrength and beauty,

leave your mirth and company, bid adieu to all the world, and look out for the grim meſſenger death, that is a-coming to diſſolve the earthly tabernacle, ſend the body to lie in a putrifying grave, and the ſoul to ſtand before God's tribunal, to be ſentenced to an endleſs ſtate.' This will be thy caſe, O young man, ſtrong man, healthful man, as really in a little, as it is of thoſe now before your eyes. O how ſoon will it come! What thought will you then have of the world, of ſin and vain company? Will any thing comfort you then but the favour of God, the love of Chriſt, and the review of a holy, well-ſpent life? Wherefore do with all thy might now what thy hand finds to do; employ the time of health well, in preparing for ſickneſs; and leave nothing to do in time of ſickneſs, which is a moſt unfit ſeaſon for a man to do ſoul-work and ſalvation-work in.

I. I ſhall begin with thoſe of the family where the harbingers of death do preſently reſide.—Surely the warning of ſickneſs and death ought to be louder in your ears than others, and moſt diligently hearkened unto by you, that lodges under the ſame roof with the meſſengers of the king of terrors.

1ſt, Remember that word, 1 Pet. v. 6. "Humble yourſelves, therefore, under tne mighty hand of God." It well becomes guilty ſinners, all the members of the family, to be humble before a holy God, when he is ſmiting any of the number.—Humbly acknowledge his ſovereignty and abſolute dominion over you, ſaying, 'Lord, thou art the author and founder of families; and thou mayeſt afflict and puniſh them as thou thinkeſt fit. Thou ſetteſt the ſolitary in families, and multiplieſt their number; and thou mayeſt diminiſh them, yea, lay them deſolate, according to thy pleaſure. Thou mighteſt have made all the members of the family

ſick, as well as one; thou mighteſt have given a deadly blow to parents, children and ſervants at once, yea, have made the houſe in which we live, a common grave, and buried us all together in its ruins.' Humbly acknowledge the juſtice and mercy of God, in the preſent viſitation. 'Lord, inſtead of one, we all deſerved to have been thrown on ſick-beds, and all of us to have been ſmitten by death. Thou puniſheſt us leſs than our iniquities deſerve.' Acknowledge alſo God's wiſdom and love in the preſent affliction, and humbly ſubmit to take the cup which he hath mingled for you. 'The cup which our heavenly Father hath ordered for this family, ſhall we not drink it? It is a gracious and wiſe God that doth what is done in the family; therefore it is our part to be dumb, and not to open our mouths to quarrel.'

2*dly*, The command which the King of Nineveh gave all his ſubjects, when threatened with ruin, Jonah iii. 8. is very proper for a maſter of a family to give to all under his charge, when ſickneſs doth rage among them; "Faſt, and cry mightily to God, and turn every one from his evil way:—Who can tell if God will turn away from his fierce anger, that we periſh not?' When the deſtroying angel gets a commiſſion to ſmite families with mortal and infectious diſeaſes, which ſometimes go from houſe to houſe like a plague, ſweeping many old and young off the ſtage; then, eſpecially, it ſhould be a time of mighty crying and pleading with God for mercy. And ſince our pleading is wholly ineffectual without an atoning ſacrifice to incenſed juſtice, let us not forget to bring the all-ſufficient ſacrifice of Chriſt's blood alongſt with us, and plead this with God, for averting his wrath from our houſes and families. As Moſes ſaid to Aaron, in a time of common calamity, Numb. xiv. 46. ſo may I ſay to you that are heads of families,

"Take a cenſer and incenſe, and go quickly and make an atonement for them: for there is wrath gone out from the Lord; the plague is begun.' Bring the incenſe of Chriſt's ſatisfaction, that great atonement to divine juſtice, which was typified by the legal ſacrifices and oblations.—Humbly and earneſtly plead that great ſacrifice with God, for turning away the fierceneſs of his wrath. Get the bunch of hyſſop, faith, in order to the ſprinkling of your houſes with that atoning blood, that ſo you and your families may be among the preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus.

Laſtly, Let all in the family where ſickneſs is, and eſpecially the head of it, remember that word, Job xxii. 23. "Thou ſhalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles." God hath ſent ſickneſs with this meſſage to you, 'Search out family-ſins, whether of omiſſion or commiſſion; mourn over them, turn from them, baniſh them far away. Let no vice lodge under your roof. Let family-worſhip be no more neglected, nor ſlightly performed. Let God have both the morning and evening ſacrifice.' Now, if the members of theſe families viſited with ſickneſs, who are in health for the preſent, would thus humble themſelves, cry to God, plead the blood of Chriſt, and reform what is amiſs among them; the preſent affliction would be ſanctified, and they, in ſome meaſure, prepared for the like trial, when God ſhall be pleaſed to put the cup in their hands.

II. In the next place, let me warn all the friends and neighbours of the ſick, whether they be in the family or not, to improve the day of health, in making ready for the time of ſickneſs. Be much in the exerciſe of ſelf-examination, humiliation for ſin, believing in Chriſt, renewing covenant with God, mortifying of ſin, trimming the lamp, meditating of heaven, living by faith,

deniedneſs to the world, ſtudying to overcome the love of life, and fears of death. Concerning all which, I have given directions in the foregoing chapters of this book, when ſpeaking to the ſick and diſtreſſed. Theſe exerciſes are not only proper for the ſick, but alſo for theſe in health; and are ſuitable preparations for ſickneſs and death, to be ſtudied by all men in every condition. But there are ſome things further moſt neceſſary to be minded by people in time of their health, in order to prepare them for the time of ſickneſs, and of dying, before it come.

1*ſt*, Make your latter-will, keep it by you, that you may not be incumbered with your worldly affairs, in time of ſickneſs, or at a dying hour. Surely it is great wiſdom to put this work by-hand in time of health. But I have ſpoken largely of this, Chap. I. Direct. VI.

2*dly*, Take heed in time of health, that you lay not up ſad proviſion againſt the day of ſickneſs, by your careleſs and untender walk. As it is ſin that brings on ſickneſs upon us, ſo it is ſin that imbitters it unto us. O beware of all known ſin, and particularly the ſins of earthly-mindedneſs, unthankfulneſs for mercies, lukewarmneſs in religion, neglecting to improve Chriſt, neglect of prayer, and formality in it, quenching of the Spirit, falling from your firſt love, breach of vows, miſcarrying under ſignal mercies, ſinning after afflictions, returning to old ſins. Guard againſt theſe evils now in time of health, otherwiſe they will put thorns in your pillow when ſickneſs cometh. Dare not to live in ſuch a courſe as you would not adventure to die in. How do you know but your next ſtep may be into the grave? And, would you be willing to lie down there in your ſins, with earthly, dead, formal, wandering and unbelieving hearts?

3*dly*, Sit looſe from the world, and live as ſtran-

gers in it, that you may be able to pack up and be-gone from it upon ſhort warning. Let death find you dead before-hand, dead to the world. If your affections be glued to the world, it will be a violent rendering, and ſad parting you will have with it, when the dying hour cometh. You will be ready, like Lot's wife, to linger, hanker, and look greedily back again.

4*thly*, Keep ſhort reckonings with God and conſcience, that you may not have old ſcores to reckon upon when you come to the death-bed. O what ſtinging pain and torment may one ſin unmourned for, coſt you at that time! Let conſcience then bring in the accounts of every day before you ſleep, and ſpeedily take up every controverſy that may fall out betwixt God and thy ſoul.

5*thly*, Dwell much upon the thoughts of death, that you may learn to be acquainted and familiar with it, as Job was, who ſaid, before-hand, "to corruption, thou art my father, and to the worm, thou art my mother and my ſiſter," Job xvii. 14. For this cauſe the Egyptians uſed to place a dead man's ſcull in ſome conſpicuous place of their rooms; likewiſe the Jews had their ſepulchres in their gardens of pleaſure, that ſo, in midſt of their delights, they might think on their dying-time. We read of Philip king of Macedon, that ordered a page every morning to rouſe him from ſleep with theſe words, 'O King, remember thou art a mortal man." By this oft repeated leſſon, he laboured to humble his lofty mind, and make his acquaintance with death, that it might not ſeem ſtrange or ſurpriſing to him, when it ſhould actually come and ſnatch him away.

6*thly*, Study to ſpend every day as it were to be your laſt, and perform every duty as it were the laſt, ſtill looking on ſickneſs and death as very near. That which makes moſt men ſo unconcerned about ſickneſs, death and eternity, is, they view them as

things afar off, at thirty or forty years diſtance. They think their time will be long here: Why? They are healthy, of a ſtrong conſtitution, and their fathers lived ſo long; which ſurely are falſe rules to judge by. It was the expectation of many years, that helped on the ruin of that rich fool in the goſpel. It were far better for every man to look on himſelf as ſtanding every day and night at the very door of eternity, and hundreds of diſeaſes ready to open the door to let him in. When you lie down at night, leave your heart with Chriſt, and compoſe your ſpirit ſo, as if you were not to awake till the heavens are no more: for certainly that night cometh, of which you will never ſee the morning; or that morning, of which you will never ſee the night. But which of your mornings or nights theſe will be, you know not, ſeeing your times are not in your own hands.

7thly, Set apart ſome time daily for thinking, in a retired way, on your time that is paſt, and upon eternity that is to come. The neglect of this duty of meditation and retired thinking, is very prejudicial both to the godly and ungodly. It was David's practice to think, and to think upon his ways; which engaged him to reform whatever he found amiſs in them, Pſal. cxix. 59. Oh! it is the ruin of many a ſoul, that they are utter ſtrangers to this way of thinking. I have read of a father who, on his death bed, left it as a ſolemn charge upon his only ſon, who was a prodigal, that he ſhould ſpend a quarter of an hour every day in retired thinking, and let him chuſe any ſubject he pleaſed. The ſon thinks this an eaſy taſk, undertakes it, and after his father's death ſet himſelf to perform his promiſe: One day he thinks upon his by-paſt pleaſures; another day he contrives his future delights; after a while, he begins to think ſeriouſly what might be his father's deſign in laying

this taſk upon him; at length he thinks, his father was a wiſe and good man, and therefore ſurely he intended and hoped that, among the reſt of his meditations, he would, ſome time or other, think of religion. When this had truly poſſeſt his thoughts, one thought and queſtion comes upon the back of another, about his by-paſt life and future ſtate, that he could not contain himſelf in ſo ſhort a confinement, but was that night without ſleep; yea, and afterwards could have no reſt till he became ſeriouſly religious. O that I could perſuade all careleſs and unthinking ſouls to go and do likewiſe! Ah! how many ſpend their days in a hurry about worldly affairs, and periſh for want of thinking?

8*thly*, Among other ſubjects of your retired thoughts, ſpend ſome time in thinking how awful and terrible a thing it muſt be for a poor Chriſtleſs ſoul to make its appearance before an angry God after death; "For who (ſaith the prophet) can dwell with devouring fire? who can abide with everlaſting burnings?" I have read of a certain king of Hungary, who being on a time marvellouſly ſad and heavy, his brother, who was a briſk and gallant man, would needs know the reaſon: 'Oh brother (ſaid he) I have been a great ſinner againſt God, and I know not how I ſhall appear before his judgment-ſeat.' His brother anſwered, 'Theſe are but melancholy thoughts;' and ſo made light of them as moſt courtiers uſe to do. The king replied nothing at that time; but the cuſtom of that country was (the government being abſolute) if the executioner ſounded a trumpet at a man's door, he was preſently to be led to execution. The king ſent the executioner, in the dead-time of the night, and cauſed him ſound his trumpet before his brother's door, who, hearing and ſeeing the meſſenger of death, ſprang in trembling into his brother's preſence, falls down upon his knees, and beſeeches the king to let him

know wherein he had offended him. 'O brother (ſaid the king) you never offended me, but loved me; but is the ſight of an earthly executioner ſo terrible to thee; and ſhall not I, who am ſo great a ſinner, fear much more to be brought to the judgment-ſeat of an angry God.'

9*thly*, Think often how religious men uſe to wiſh they had lived, when they came to the ſick and dying time. Theſe who have ſpent their time moſt careleſly, begin to have other notions of religion when they ſee the grim meſſenger approaching. Go to their bed-ſides, and aſk them, whether ſloth or diligence, formality or fervency, drinking or praying, loving the world or loving Chriſt, be the beſt; would they not tell you, that there are none ſo wiſe as they that are moſt religious? Think, O man, in health, with thyſelf, if thou waſt juſt now upon thy death-bed, and ſaweſt thy friends ſtanding mourning round about thee, but unable to help thee, what would be thy thoughts and diſcourſe at that time? O then let ſome of the ſame thoughts and diſcourſe fill up every day and hour of thy life now. Why? thou knoweſt not but this moment thou mayeſt be as near death, as if thy friends and phyſicians too were deſpairing of thy life, and had given you over for dead.

10*thly*, Be employed now in fighting the good fight of faith. You have many enemies to deal with, and death is the laſt of them. Would you obtain the victory over them? Then get on the Chriſtian armour, and make much uſe of the ſhield of faith. We read in the book of Eſther, that king Ahaſuerus would not recal the proclamation he had emitted againſt the Jews; but he gave them full liberty to take up arms to defend themſelves, and attack their enemies: So, here, God will not recal the ſentence of death he hath paſt on all men in the garden; but, nevertheleſs, he allows, yea,

commiſſionates all true Iſraelites to take up arms againſt death, to conquer and trample it under foot by faith.

Laſtly, Be buſy now in health, providing and laying up a ſtock againſt the time of ſickneſs and affliction; which may contribute to your comfortable living then, when the world's good things will be taſteleſs and comfortleſs to you. As thoſe who have a voyage to go, do victual the ſhip; and theſe who have a ſiege to hold out, take in proviſions; even ſo do ye.

1. Get a ſtock of graces againſt that time, eſpecially a ſtock of faith, of patience, of humility, ſelf-denial, &c. There will be uſe for all theſe then. A little grace, or a little faith, is not enough; for this will faint under great afflictions. We read, Matth. xiv. that, when the winds began to blow fiercely, Peter's little faith began to fail. You have need of a great meaſure of patience againſt that time, that you may wait patiently on God till he come to your relief. You know not but he may lengthen out your trials, and tarry till the fourth watch of the night before he come with deliverance.

2. Provide a ſtock of evidences or marks of grace and of the love of God, that you may be able to aſſert your intereſt in him as your portion in Chriſt, and may be perſuaded that neither death nor life will ever ſeparate you from him.

3. Get a ſtock of divine experiences. Lay up all the experiences you have had of God's loving-kindneſs, and theſe will give great relief and encouragement to the ſoul in the day of diſtreſs.

4. Lay up a ſtock of ſermons. Treaſure up the counſels and cordials which they bring you from God's word, that ſo you may, according to Iſa. xlii. 23. "Hear for the time to come;" and eſpecially for ſick-beds, when you cannot get ſermons to hear. Then it is that you ought to live

and feed upon the ſermons you have heard.

5. Lay up a ſtock of prayers. Be much in wreſtling with God for help and through-bearing in the day of affliction: and ſo you may expect the gracious returns thereof in the day of calamity.

6. Provide a ſtock of promiſes. Be now gathering theſe ſweet cordials from God's word, lay them up in your heart and memory, and they will be very refreſhing and ſupporting to you in the day of affliction.

DIRECT. IX. *Let thoſe who are in health ſet about the work of repentance, and turning to God in Chriſt, timeouſly and quickly; and beware of delaying this work until the time of ſickneſs and of dying.*

GOD's command to you is, to ſet about the work preſently without any delay, Heb. iii. 15. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."—Matth. xxi. 28. "Go work to-day in my vineyard."—Eccleſ. xii. 1. "Remember, now, thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Well, God's voice to you, O man in health, is to-day; but the devil's voice, is to-morrow: And which of the two will you hearken to? Surely it is your wiſdom to obey the voice of your Creator and friend, and not of your enemy and deſtroyer. Why? to-day thou art in health, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in ſickneſs; to-day thou art on earth, to-morrow thou mayeſt be in hell; to-day Chriſt is inviting you to come to him, to-morrow he may be ſentencing you to depart from him! And conſider, that the devil, who tempts you to delay this day, will be as ready to tempt you to the ſame to-morrow; and ſo the devil's to-morrow will never come. It will ſtill be to-morrow with him, till the laſt hour, that ſo he may get you cheated out of your whole time and ſalvation together.

Here I ſhall endeavour two things: 1. Bring arguments to perſuade you to repent and cloſe with the offers of Chriſt preſently, without any delay, as God requires. 2. Shew the evil and danger of delaying till the time of ſickneſs and of dying. As to the firſt, viz. Arguments for preſent repentance, and againſt delaying the work.

1ſt, Conſider the uncertainty of your life and time to repent. Your life is but a vapour, a little warm breath, that is going out and in at your noſtrils, which may be ſtopt by death ere you be aware; thou knoweſt not what will be to-morrow, Prov. xxvi. 11. It was the ſaying of a godly man, when invited to a feaſt upon the morrow, "I have not had a morrow for theſe many years." It was a bad uſe theſe Epicureans made of this uncertainty, Iſa. xxii. 13. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we ſhall die." It is much wiſer to ſay, 'Let us pray, and turn to the Lord, for to-morrow we ſhall die.' Nay, you have no ſecurity for one hour to repent in; for God hath a thouſand diſeaſes and accidents ready to ſtop your breath, and end your days, whenever he pleaſeth to give them orders. There are many ſecure ſinners, who preſume on long life, but there are none nearer deſtruction than ſuch; for God loves to diſappoint theſe that promiſe themſelves a long life in ſin and impenitency, as he did that rich man who was laying up for many years, Luke xii. 19. "This night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee." And O what a dark and diſmal night will it be, if death come before thy repentance! O man, thou never didſt lie down one night with aſſurance of riſing again; thou never heardſt one ſermon with aſſurance of hearing another; thou never didſt draw one breath with aſſurance of drawing another! What madneſs is it then, to delay ſalvation-work one day or hour longer, and ſo to leave the weightieſt matter in the world at the greateſt uncertainty?

2*dly*, Conſider that though God, in his wonderful mercy and patience, ſhould prolong your days; yet the longeſt life is ſhort enough for the work you have to do, ſuppoſe you begin it preſently. Nay, had you Methuſaleh's years to ſpend, they would be no more than ſufficient to repent and mourn for the ſins and guilt which you have been ſo long contracting; to perform and amend the many things that have been amiſs; to perform all the duties incumbent on you; to make ſure your calling and election, and put your ſoul in a good poſture and preparation for an eternal ſtate, and get them made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. Now, do you think that all this work can be done in an inſtant, or in time of ſickneſs or old age, when you are hardly fit to do any thing? When a man's ſpirit is unable to bear the infirmities of nature, how will he be able to bear the laſhes of a guilty conſcience or a wounded ſpirit? When the underſtanding is weak, the memory frail, the will obſtinately bent the wrong way, by a long cuſtom of ſinning, and neglecting of duty; will that be a fit time to begin the work of repentance and converſion to God? When nature is decayed, and the candle of life juſt ſinking in the ſocket, will you begin then to act for God, and make your light ſhine before men to his glory? O remember your work is long, your time is ſhort; and though you begin this very hour, you will have no time to ſpare.

3*dly*, Delay not this work, becauſe it is not in your power to do it when you pleaſe. It is a deluſion of the devil, to imagine you may repent when you will. No, no; it is God only that giveth repentance, and he gives it when and to whom he pleaſeth, Acts v. 31. And it is a mere peradventure if ever he gives it to a delaying ſinner, 2 Tim. ii. 25. When is it that you may have hopes he will give

repentance, but when he calls you to it, and preſcribes means to be uſed for that end! Now, that is, "To-day, to-day, if you will hear his voice: Now is the accepted time, now is the day of ſalvation." To-day, when God is calling, and the Spirit ſtriving, is the time of finding the Lord, and getting repentance from him. To-morrow it may be too late; the Lord's hand may be cloſed, and the door of mercy ſhut. If you refuſe the Spirit when he ſtrives with you, he may leave you, and never put another ſerious thought in your heart of turning to the Lord. O defer not ſeeking repentance till it be too late; for there is a time when the Lord will not be found, and then repentance will not be found, though you ſeek it with tears. Indeed, God hath promiſed mercy to penitent ſinners, but he hath no-where promiſed the aids of his grace and Spirit to them that put off their repentance; and he hath no-where promiſed acceptance to mere grief and ſorrow for ſin, without faith and fruits meet for repentance: he hath no-where promiſed to pardon theſe, who at laſt promiſe to leave their ſins, when they can keep them no longer.

4*thly*, The longer repentance and cloſing with Chriſt is delayed, the difficulty thereof is every day increaſed. Why? 1. Becauſe of the deceitful nature of ſin, which doth daily bewitch and harden the heart the more in the practice of it. 2. Cuſtom in any thing hath a ſtrange influence on us, and becomes a kind of ſecond nature, and breeds an almoſt inviſible inclination to what ſoever we have long addicted ourſelves unto, whether it be in actions natural or moral. Hence Ovid gives that good advice,

Sed propera, nec te venturas differ in horas:
Qui non eſt hodie, cras, minas aptus erit.

'Be ſpeedy, put not off till another time:
'He who is not prepared to-day, will be more unprepared to-morrow.'

He that goes on from day to-day in ſin, will find his indiſpoſition to repent daily increaſed, the habits of ſin ſtrengthened, and himſelf brought at length under the power of an inveterate cuſtom. And, if it be hard to break any cuſtom, much more a cuſtom of ſinning, which is ſo agreeable to depraved nature. Hence ſaith the Spirit of God, Jer. xiii. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? Then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil." 3. The longer Satan keeps poſſeſſion, the more difficult will his ejection prove. The devils that poſſeſſed the man from the womb up, could not be caſt out but by ſome extraordinary way. 4. Delays bring on ſpiritual judgments from God, ſuch as judicial hardneſs on the heart, which will make repentance impoſſible, according to that terrible place, Iſa. vi. 9, 10. "Make the heart of this people fat," &c. which is quoted no leſs than ſix times in the New Teſtament, as if it belonged only to them that linger and ſit impenitent under goſpel-calls.

Laſtly, We would reckon ſuch delays madneſs in earthly affairs, which are but trifles when compared to ſalvation-work. If a man's houſe were on fire, we would count him mad, if he would ſay, it is time enough to quench it to-morrow; or if he were ſtung with a venomous ſerpent, he would be mad that neglected to ſeek a preſent cure: or if he had got poiſon in his ſtomach, he would never think he could ſoon enough vomit it up. If a malefactor were condemned to a cruel death to-morrow, but had a promiſe of remiſſion if he ſhould look after it to-day; would he be ſo fooliſh as delay it till next morning? But how much greater madneſs is it, to delay repenting and fleeing to Chriſt, when God's calls and promiſes relate to the preſent time, and our danger in delaying is infinitely greater than in any of the foreſaid caſes? Surely there is no ſting

ſo dangerous, no poiſon ſo deadly as ſin, and can we too ſoon ſeek after the balm of Gilead, the blood of Chriſt, for its cure? There is no death like the ſecond death, no fire ſo dreadful as the eternal fire of God's wrath? Now, this fire is already kindled againſt your ſouls; and, if it be not timeouſly quenched, it will burn to the loweſt hell. Loſe no time to get it extinguiſhed, by fleeing to the blood of Jeſus.

II. The next thing is to ſhew the evil and danger of delaying this work until the time of ſickneſs and of dying. Alas, it is the common practice of the moſt part! But conſider, *1ſt*, What wretched ingratitude and baſeneſs there is in it! Whether is it fit ye ſhould give the beſt of your time to God, that made you; or to the devil, that ſeeks your deſtruction? Is it reaſonable that the devil ſhould feaſt on the flower and prime of your youth and ſtrength, and your Creator have no other but the fragments of the devil's table? When the dregs of your time are come, your ſtrength gone, your ſenſes failed, your underſtanding and memory weak, your affections ſpent upon the creature, yea, when you are good for nothing elſe; will you be ſo baſe, as think you are then good enough for God, and for ſalvation-work, which requires all your ſtrength and might? But remember, if you be ſo baſe as reſerve the dregs of your time for God, you may expect he will be ſo juſt as reſerve the dregs of his wrath for you, according to that word, Mal. i. 14. "Curſed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and ſacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing." Your youth, ſtrength, health, gifts and talents, are the males of the flock: if you give theſe to the devil, and reſerve the weakneſs of ſickneſs and old-age for God, you draw down his curſe upon your heads; and, how long will you be able to bear up under the weight

of God's curſe? Now, O delaying ſinners, why ſhould you be ſo ungrateful to God, and injurious to yourſelves? God had early thoughts of mercy to you; and, will you have nothing but late thoughts of duty to him? Chriſt did not defer his dying for us till he was old; and, ſhall we defer living to him, till we be old? Oh! we do not deal with God, as we would have him to deal with us. When we need help in trouble, we cry, as Pſal. cii. 2. "Lord, hear me; in the day when I call, anſwer me ſpeedily." To-day we ſtill make the ſeaſon of mercy, but to-morrow the ſeaſon for duty. When mercy is delayed, we impatiently cry, "How long? how long?" We will not wait God's holy leiſure. But, alas! we would have God to wait our ſinful leiſure. Oh, let us be aſhamed of ſuch diſingenuous dealing with our Creator.

2*dly*, Death may get a commiſſion to take you off ſuddenly, without giving you any time to repent. You are not ſure to ſee the evening-ſtar of ſickneſs before the night of death overtake you; or that you will have any warning given you before the fatal ſtroke. For, how many are there who project long lives, and look for time before death to repent, that get a ſurpriſing call to flit from the earthly tabernacle, and have not one minute to provide another lodging? How many are drowned by a ſudden ſtorm at ſea? And how many killed by outward accidents at land? Some drop down ſuddenly in the ſtreets; ſome die ſitting in their chairs; ſome go well to bed at night, and never ſee the morning, ſome die as quickly by a fit of an epilepſy or apoplexy, as if ſhot with a gun. Thus thouſands are hurried into eternity, and preſented before a tribunal, without being allowed ſo much time as to think one ſerious thought or ſpeak one word; not one moment to conſider where they are going, or cry to God for mercy. And, how know you but this may be your caſe at

death? Muſt it not be the greateſt folly then, to delay your repentance to a dying-time, when your life may not be one minute longer?

3*dly*, Though you may have ſome time to lie on ſick-beds, how know ye but your ſickneſs may be ſuch as ſhall incapacitate you for ſpiritual work? Some, we ſee, are ſo oppreſſed with continual ſlumbering and ſleeping, even when death is neareſt, that they are in no caſe to think or ſpeak of theſe things that belong to their everlaſting ſtate. Others in high fevers, are troubled with rovings, and have no uſe of their reaſon, ſo that they are not capable to ſettle their worldly affairs; and, how much leſs are they to ſecure their ſouls' eternal concerns at that time? Some, again, are ſo racked with extreme pains and agonies, impatient frettings, and bitter uneaſineſs, that they cannot get one ſettled thought about their ſouls' preſent or future ſtate. Others are ſo filled with terror and amazement, at the view of approaching death and eternity, that they cannot compoſe their thoughts to examine themſelves, confeſs their ſins, act faith in a Saviour, or follow any direction that is given them; but go off the ſtage in a confuſion, being incapable to do any thing to purpoſe for their ſouls. Some their diſtempers are ſuch that they are brought to a great ſtrait betwixt the word of God and the phyſician. The word of God, and his miniſters, tell them, if they do not mourn for their ſins, and wreſtle for mercy, they cannot be ſaved; but, ſaith the phyſician, if you trouble yourſelf with ſad and melancholy thoughts, you prejudice your body, and hazard your life. Oh! is this a fit time then to begin your preparation for another world?

4*thly*, The Spirit of God, being long reſiſted and vexed by many in the day of health, he is provoked to leave them on death beds to the hardneſs of their own hearts; and ſo they remain like ſtocks and ſtones, dead and ſtupid to the laſt.

5thly, The devil, that was buſy all your lives to keep you from repentance, will not be idle at this time; yea, he will be more active then, than ever, to ruin you, either by cauſing you to ſplit on the rock of preſumption or of deſpair. Sometimes he will tell ſinners then, 'You need not trouble yourſelves about your ſouls; God is more merciful than to damn you: the repentance you have already will ſerve the turn.' But if this will not quiet them, he will ſtudy to drive them to deſpair, by telling them, 'They have loſt the ſeaſon of repentance and cloſing with Chriſt; and now there is no remedy, no hope for them; and it is in vain to uſe any further means.' O then, do not hearken to Satan now, when he tempts you to delay your repentance.

6thly, Whatever appearance of repentance ſome dying perſons may have, let that be no encouragement to put off till that time. Why? there lieth a juſt ſuſpicion upon a late repentance, that it is ſeldom ſound and ſincere. It is no ſound work that ariſeth more from fears of hell, than from any real hatred of ſin; more from love to ſelf, than love to God. And it is to be feared, that death-bed repentance is moſtly of this ſort, ſeeing, ordinarily, it conſiſteth more in grief and fear, prayers and promiſes, than in a hearty loathing of ſin, love to holineſs, or willingneſs to accept of Jeſus Chriſt; for, have we not ſeen many of theſe penitents, who, in the view of death, have profeſſed great ſorrow for their wicked lives, and made ſolemn promiſes of amendment; yet, when they have happened to recover, all their righteouſneſs have vaniſhed, and they have returned to their former ſins as greedily as ever? And, O delaying ſinner, what ground have you to think, that your death-bed repentance, will be any better than theirs? Be wiſe, then, in time; ſet heartily about

ſalvation-work in the day of your health, and do not leave the weightieſt work to the weakeſt time.

Object. I. But hath not God promiſed mercy to them that repent of their ſins at any time?

Anſ. Yes, to them that repent truly and ſincerely. But do not think that it is in your power to repent ſo at any time you pleaſe; no, it is impoſſible you can do it without the influence and aſſiſtance of the Spirit of God. And God hath no-where promiſed this to theſe who put off their repentance to a death-bed. There is a great difference betwixt a ſick man's howling upon his bed, and ſincere goſpel-repenting. I grant, true repentance is never too late; but, Oh! late repentance is ſeldom true. True repentance is that which hath a care to walk holily, or hath works meet for repentance joined with it. Hence repentance is not only called *metanoiæ*, a change of mind; but alſo *metameleia*, an after-care. Now, for a death-bed repentance, that hath no ſuch holy care or good works, I know no promiſe in the Bible that annexeth ſalvation unto it.

Object. II. Do we not read in Chriſt's parable of the labourers, Matth. xx. that ſome were hired and brought into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, and got the ſame reward with thoſe that were hired at the third and ſixth hour?

Anſ. 1. Theſe that were brought in ſo late, could ſay for themſelves, verſe 6. "That no man had hired them," or had offered to hire them before: they did no ſooner hear the goſpel-call, and offers of ſalvation, thro' Chriſt, tendered to them. But, Oh! this will ſtand you in no ſtead, who have had many a call and offer made you, at the third, ſixth and ninth hour, and have reſiſted and refuſed them: you will not have it to ſay at the eleventh hour, as theſe had, "No man hath hired us."

2*dly*, These men, though they came in but at the eleventh hour, not being sooner hired, yet they were labourers in the vineyard, and wrought one hour therein faithfully, in obedience to their Lord's command; and so brought forth some fruits meet for repentance, and were accepted. But this is no encouragement to any to expect to be brought in at the twelfth hour, when there is no time to work, nor bring forth any fruits to testify the sincerity of their repentance; we have no promise of acceptance made to such.

Object. III. The penitent thief on the cross sought mercy from Christ at the last hour, and got it.

Ans. This is a singular instance, and gives no encouragement to delaying sinners. The scriptures contain a history of more than four thousand years, and yet during all that time, we have but one example of a man that truly and sincerely repented when he came to die. And in this man's case there was such an extraordinary conjunction of circumstances, as never happened before, and can never fall out again to the end of the world. This man had the happiness to die close by the newly pierced and bleeding wounds of a crucified Jesus, when he was lifted up from the earth in the height of his love, drawing sinners to salvation; which was a juncture that can never have a parallel. Again, the man never had any offer of Christ, nor day of grace before now; he surrendered himself upon the very first call: and his faith in Christ, at this time, was truly singular and miraculous. He was designed by heaven to be made a rare monument of the power of Christ's grace, and a special trophy of his victory over the devils and wicked men, at a time when they seemed to triumph over him, as one crucified through weakness.

From all which we may ſee, that this example was extraordinary, and affords no ground for the preſumption of delaying ſinners. You may as well caſt yourſelves into the ſea, in hopes of preſervation by a whale, from the example of Jonah, as defer repentance now, in hopes of repenting on a death-bed, from the example of the thief on the croſs. Beſides, your way of ſinning differs vaſtly from his: he was not guilty of preſumption, as you are; he did not ſlight Chriſt's calls and offers, in the days of his health, and delay his repenting and cloſing with Chriſt, in hopes of an opportunity for them at the hour of death, as you do. Do you know what God determines concerning preſumptuous ſinning? You may ſee it, Numb. xv. 28. 30, 31. "And the prieſts ſhall make an atonement for the ſoul that ſinneth ignorantly, &c. But the ſoul that doeth ought preſumptuouſly (whether he be born in the land, or a ſtranger) the ſame reproacheth the Lord; and that ſoul ſhall be cut off from his people; becauſe he hath deſpiſed the word of the Lord." O preſumptuous, delaying ſinner, let this word of the Lord awaken you to a ſpeedy and preſent reſolution to obey his voice. "Return ye now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good," Jer. xviii. 11. Now is the accepted time; if ye will hear his voice, it muſt be to-day. Lord, ſave us from hardening our hearts. *Amen.*

FINIS.

SOME

DYING WORDS

OF THE LATE

REV. MR. JOHN WILLISON,

To his WIFE and CHILDREN:

Found among his Papers after his Death, dated the 10th of November, 1749.

To my WIFE.

My Dear,

MY diſtreſs calls me to think of parting with you; the will of the Lord be done. I thank you for your tender care of me; may the Lord bleſs and reward you for it, and ſanctify your own tenderneſs, and ſupport you under it. As you have ſtudied to live a life of faith and prayer all your days, ſo I hope and believe you will continue to the end. In all your difficulties and fears, encourage yourſelf in the Lord your God. Commit your way to him; truſt him that is faithful and true. I reſign you, my dear, to the Huſband of huſbands, our deareſt Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

To my CHILDREN.

DEAR children, your earthly father muſt leave you; your heavenly Father is immortal. O! cleave faſt to him. Trifle not about your ſouls' concerns in time of health; mind theſe things as the one thing needful; this you will not repent of, when you come within a near view of death and endleſs eternity. O ſirs! preſs for clear views of your intereſt in Chriſt, the only Surety and Saviour of ſinners. Among other evidences of it, live by faith on him, and ſtudy holineſs in heart and life. Dear Sirs, think how you will be able to ſtand before Chriſt your Judge at the laſt day, unleſs

you have Chriſt's image on you, and be made new creatures. Lord make you all ſuch, and bleſs you with his beſt bleſſing! My bleſſing be upon you all. What means God gave me, I have beſtowed them on you, or left them to you. Be kind and careful of your mother while you have her. And let none of you forget, that though I go before you to the duſt, you muſt all quickly follow me. O! that we may all meet together at the right hand of our bleſſed Redeemer, to ſee his face, and ſing his praiſe. The time is near, be ye therefore alſo ready.

Now, my dear wife and children, remember what is above as the words of your affectionate huſband and loving father, who being dead, yet hereby ſpeaketh to you for your eternal good and happineſs; may they ſink into your heart! So prayeth

JOHN WILLISON.

SOME OF HIS

DYING EJACULATIONS,

As they were Written by himſelf a few days before he died, and left with his Bible lying on his pillow, the—day of May, 1750.

O Let me ſleep in Jeſus!

I would not live always in this evil world, that has little in it tempting, and ſeems ſtill to grow worſe, and where the torrent of ſin and backſliding ſeems to grow ſtronger.

I would deſire to depart, and to be with Chriſt, which is far better than to be here. I am willing rather to be abſent from the body, and preſent with the Lord. Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none upon earth I deſire beſides thee. For, though my heart, ſtrength, and fleſh fail; yet the Lord will be the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee. I have waited for thy ſalvation, O Lord.

O for Simeon's frame, to be ſaying, "Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, for mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation."

When Chriſt ſays, 'Surely, I come quickly,' may my ſoul anſwer, 'Even ſo, come Lord Jeſus.'

I am living on the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, yea, dying in the Lord. 'Even ſo come.' I am detained here on the ſhore, waiting for a fair wind to carry me over this Jordan. I have waited, and will wait for thy ſalvation, O Lord. The Lord is a Rock, and his work is perfect: Lord, perfect what concerneth me.

O that I could ſay with Paul, "The time of my departure is at hand. I have kept the faith, I have fought the good fight, I have run my race, I have finiſhed my courſe; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteouſneſs, which the righteous Lord will give me at his coming."

I am vile and polluted, O how ſhall I be cleanſed! But that is a comfortable promiſe, "The blood of Jeſus Chriſt, his Son, cleanſeth from all ſin." And ſo is that, "Though ye have lien among the pots, ye ſhall be as doves, whoſe wings are covered with ſilver, and their feathers with yellow gold."

I reſolve to obey, to ſubmit to the Lord's will, to die like Moſes and Aaron, the one at mount Hor, the other at mount Abiram. They went up, and died there at the command of the Lord.

O that when my fleſh and ſtrength fail, God may be the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever! When now the keepers of the houſe do tremble, O that God may be the keeper! When the grinders ceaſe, becauſe they are few, O that God would feed my ſoul with manna, that will need none of theſe implements! When the daughters of muſic are brought low, O to be fitted

for the heavenly muſic above! When the lookers-out at the windows are darkened, O that my ſoul may be enlightened to ſee Jeſus my Redeemer!

Lord, help the unbelief and infidelity of my heart; and help to more of the faith of a riſen Jeſus, and aſcended Redeemer. O let me believe and feel the ſweetneſs of that word of Chriſt, "I aſcend to my Father and your Father, and to my God, and your God."

O how ſhall ſuch an unholy creature as I, preſume to enter into ſuch a pure and holy place! But the apoſtle hath taught us, we may have boldneſs to enter into the holieſt of all by the blood of Jeſus.

O that when the time of my laſt combat comes with my laſt enemy death, I may be helped above all to take the ſhield of faith, whereby I may be relieved from the ſting of death, and may quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

O that I may be helped to adore the ſovereignty of God, kiſs his rod, and humbly ſubmit to it. Save me from both extremes; let me never deſpiſe the chaſtening of the Lord, nor faint when I am rebuked of him.

Now the prince of darkneſs will ſtudy to raiſe tempeſts of temptations to ſhipwreck the poor weather-beaten veſſel of my ſoul, when it would enter into the harbour of reſt above; may Chriſt come to be pilot, ſteer the helm, and it ſhall be ſafe.

O for more faith! may my faith ripen to a full aſſurance, that I may go off the ſtage rejoicing, and an abundant entrance may be adminiſtered to me into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

O for more faith, that I may die like Simeon, when he had Chriſt in his arms, ſaying, "Now let thy ſervant depart in peace, mine eyes have ſeen thy ſalvation."

Lord, one ſmile of thy countenance would baniſh all my doubts and fears, and make me ſing in pains.

Is my Redeemer gone to prepare a place for me? why ſhould I be ſloathful to follow his ſteps, when he is ſaying, 'Come up hither; come up, dwell here; come up, reign here; come up, ſing here?'

O Lord, deliver my ſoul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling. O ſave me from the horrible pit, draw me out of the miry clay, ſet my feet upon a rock, and eſtabliſh my goings, and put a new ſong in my mouth.

O give grace to ſtrive by faith and prayer to enter in at the ſtrait gate. Lord, thou haſt bid me knock, and it ſhall be opened; aſk, and ye ſhall receive; ſeek and ye ſhall find. Lord, I knock, open to me; Lord, I would be in, I muſt be in; let me but in over the threſhold; let me within ſight of my Redeemer's face, within ſight of the ſmiles of his countenance; let me within hearing of the ſongs of the redeemed; let me get to the out-ſide of that praiſing company; I will be well enough if I get in.

Lord, in I muſt be, out I cannot ſtay: O ſhut me not out with the ſwearers, Sabbath-breakers, and profane perſons. Lord, I never choſe their company while in this world; Lord, do not gather my ſoul with ſinners hereafter.

The redeemed are gathering, and the wicked are gathering, Lord, gather me with thy flock; they are faſt gathering: the church's Head is gone; he has left the earth, and entered into his glory; my brethren and friends, many of them have arrived where he is; I am yet behind. O how great is the difference betwixt my ſtate and theirs. I am groaning out my complaint, they are ſinging God's praiſe: I am in darkneſs, and cannot ſee thy face, but they behold thee face to face. O ſhould I be ſatisfied to ſtay behind, when my friends are gone! ſhall I wander here in a hungry deſart, when they are triumphing above, and dividing the ſpoil? O help me to look after them with a ſtedfaſt eye, and cry, O Lord, how long!

O heavenly Father, draw me after Jeſus; for none can come to him without thy aid. O Father, draw me up there where he is, and I will mount up as on eagles' wings. O draw me; and when thou ſeemeſt to fly from me, Lord enable me to follow hard after thee.

Lord, give me the ſtaff of a promiſe in my hand, that I may go over Jordan with it. O give me ſuch a promiſe as that, "When thou paſſeſt through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they ſhall not overflow thee. When thou walkeſt through the fire, thou ſhalt not be burnt, neither ſhall the flame kindle upon thee."

Lord, my experiences are ſmall, my manifeſtations few; theſe I will not lean to: yet I will remember thee from the land of Jordan, from the Hermonites, and from the hill Mizar. Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul, and why diſquieted within me? Hope thou in God; for I ſhall praiſe him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

O thou who remembereſt the dying thief, when on the way to thy kingdom, O remember me, when now ſeated in thy kingdom, and ſay to my ſoul, when I am dying, "This day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe."

Lord, I am called to the work I never did, O give me the ſtrength I never had. O ſtrengthen me, like Samſon, for this once, when at death, to pull down the ſtrong holds of ſin in me. Lord, waſh away my ſins in the blood of Chriſt, and then my ſoul ſhall not ſink in the ocean of thy wrath.

O what is my life but a vapour! a ſand-glaſs of ſixty or ſeventy years! O how faſt does it run down! how ſoon runs it out! Vain, vain is the love of life! O give me grace to overcome the love of life, and the fear of death. O for more patience and leſs fretting. If the damned had hope of being ſaved from hell after a thouſand years of my pain, how

willingly would they endure it? Bleſſed be God, my pains are not hell, their ſtate is not mine.

Lord, draw near to me, and ſave me; my body is full of trouble, and my life draws near to the grave. But, Lord, thy loving-kindneſs is better than life; O make thy loving-kindneſs ſure to me, and I will willingly part with this dying life.

Oh that I could make all the world ſee the beauty of my precious and adorable Saviour.

Nothing but an intereſt in Chriſt can give peace in life, or comfort in death. He is the chief among ten thouſand, and altogether lovely.—My body is in part dead, but I know I cannot die eternally, while Jeſus lives. I muſt go down to the grave; but what is the grave? It is but a refining pot, ſince my Saviour lay in it; it is but a bed of roſes. He is the Roſe of Sharon, and the Lily of the valley.

It was his free grace that drew me, and made me willing in the day of his power; no deſert, no merit in me, it was all free and undeſerved.

O let the chaſtiſement of my body be the medicine of my ſoul, to cure me of ſin, and bring me to ſincere repentance for it: for Chriſt was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities; the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him.

Lord, remember the chaſtiſements of Chriſt for ſin, and let my pains be the chaſtiſement of a father, and not the wounds of an enemy. Let Chriſt's ſufferings mitigate mine.

I rejoice in the proſpect of that glorious inheritance reſerved ſafe. I could not comfortably enter eternity any other way but in and through this God-man Mediator: if he was not God as well as man, I could not be ſupported, but he is God.

Oh, this precious Saviour, he is my all in all; he is my all-ſufficient good, my portion, and my choice; in him my vaſt deſires are fulfilled, and all my powers rejoice. I am travelling thro' a wilderneſs to a city of habitation, whoſe builder and maker is God.

Oh, delightful thought! that I, who was going on in ſin, ſhould be plucked as a brand out of the burning! Oh, how will they lie on a death-bed, that have nothing but their own works to fly to! With only this to depend on, I ſhould be the moſt miſerable of all creatures: but the long white robes of my Redeemer's righteouſneſs are all my deſire. They are truly bleſſed, they alone are happy, who are enabled to exult in the garment of celeſtial glory, which never waxeth old, in the illuſtrious robes of a Saviour's conſummate righteouſneſs, which are incorruptible and immortal. This is a robe which hides every ſin, of thought, word or deed, that I have committed. O how unſpeakably happy are they, who are juſtified by this all-perfect righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and who therein can conſtantly triumph and glory!

Lord, I live upon Chriſt, I live upon his righteouſneſs, I live upon his blood and merits; yea, I die alſo leaning wholly upon this bottom. It is not paſt experiences or manifeſtations I depend upon: it is Chriſt, a preſent all-ſufficient Saviour, and perfect righteouſneſs in him, I look to. All my attainments are but loſs and dung beſides him.

When I find myſelf polluted, I go to this fountain for cleanſing. Lord, give me delight in approaching to thee; delight to be at a throne of grace. O that I could make my bed there, lie and die there.

The kingdom of heaven ſuffers violence, and the violent take it by force. O for ſtrength to offer a holy violence by faith and prayer!

Thus the Author died as he lived, teſtifying the power of religion upon himſelf; and that at a time when men have moſt need of its comforts. The foregoing words are tranſcribed from his own manuſcript, now lying in the hands of Mr. BELL, miniſter at Aberbrothock.

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PRINTED BY T. JOHNSTON,
FALKIRK, 1800.